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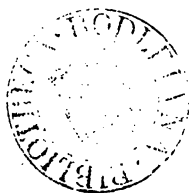




THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

THE
CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS

EXPLAINED AND DEFENDED.



BY

JAMES STACEY.

LONDON:

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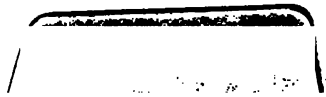
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But why, it may be asked, since such is the character of their productions, add another work to the list? The question is not impertinent, and may be briefly answered.

Only one of the works referred to, that of Dr. Halley, covers the whole ground which the present publication is designed to occupy. The others are devoted to baptism alone, and that of Dr. Beecher exclusively to one branch of the subject, the mode of the rite. Besides, the object of this Treatise is rather expository than controversial, and the argument intended more for instruction, where instruction is needed, than for refutation, where opposing views are held. Its whole design will be met if it serve for convenient reference, and for assistance to the general reader; especially if it tend to confirm, by making more enlightened and Scriptural, the faith of those who by education have inherited, or by union to some particular Church have tacitly adopted, the views it professes to establish.

Moreover, no work of a similar character exists in the Denomination to which the author belongs, nor, so far as he knows, in any one of the Methodist Communities; though Tracts, &c., of considerable ability have been published on single branches of the general subject. For this reason the present volume, it may be thought, will find a place not hitherto wholly taken up; and will intro-

Since the question of the Sacraments to a number of readers whose religious associations are too limited to bring them, by the interest they feel in their authors, within the attraction of larger and greater works. To this may be added the fact, that almost every writer, particularly on theology and religion, who gives the results of careful inquiry and of independent though not eccentric judgment, represents more or less faithfully some distinctive class of mind. Looking at truth through the medium of his own constitution, he stamps upon it the impress of his own individuality; and this, addressing itself to those of a similar constitution, excites an interest or secures a conviction which writers of a different class would fail to produce.

But even these considerations were not the original motives to the preparation of this Treatise. Indeed, it owes its existence to no premeditated design of the author at all. It has grown, as a work undertaken from pleasure or pastime often grows, from a comparatively few pages to its present size, and from a mere introduction to another volume to a separate publication.

In the year 1850 it was determined by the Conference held at Leeds to prepare a book of offices for the celebration of marriage, the interment of the dead, and the ordination of ministers; also for the administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, with an Introduction

expository of the faith of the Connexion on these two ordinances. The writing of this Introduction was committed to the author, who executed the greater part of his task; but, owing to circumstances which need not here be named, the project of publication was suspended, and has not since been resumed.

In the mean time the author resolved to re-write what he had prepared, not with any view of giving his thoughts to the world, but partly from his love of study—partly that he might have a subject of commanding interest on hand to turn to for profitable employment when no other duty of pressing urgency called him to a different work—but most of all that he might assure himself, by calm and patient inquiry, that the faith he had received and professed was in strict agreement with the word of God. This last motive operated the more powerfully because of the comparative indifference felt by some towards the ordinances, and the high functions attributed to them by others.

The subject opened, and the work grew; the former acquired a continually augmenting interest, and the latter as constantly increased in size. At length, having brought the discussion to nearly its present shape, the author resolved, for the reasons already assigned, *fortified* as they were by the judgment of two or three

intelligent friends, to whom a portion of the manuscript had been shewn, to publish what he had prepared. He therefore now offers it to the Christian public, in the hope that what has been written with advantage to himself, will not be perused without profit to the reader.

For the copious Index to the work the author is indebted to his valued friend, the Rev. J. Hudston, of Huddersfield, whose kindness in this service it is equally his duty and his gratification to acknowledge.

HALIFAX, NOVEMBER, 1855.

CHAPTER I.

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS.—ORIGIN AND NUMBER OF THE SACRAMENTS.

The essence of personal religion consists in the knowledge of God, but of God as revealed through the medium of his well-beloved Son. However the first conception of him may originate, it is true, in that higher sense in which alone the knowledge can avail us, that "no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him." Jesus Christ is God in self-announcement and self-manifestation. In his person he is "the only-begotten of the Father," in his ministry he is "full of grace and truth." By the disciple who knew him best he is called the Word of God, the revelation and utterance of his supremely glorious character. He is God under human conditions and in a redeeming aspect, addressing us in our nature that he may attract us to his fellowship, and make us partakers of his blessedness. Christianity is the sum of his revelations, presenting and unfolding to our view his whole person and work as the Light and the Life of men. "The Gospel," says Cudworth, "is nothing else but God descending into the world in our form, and conversing with us in our likeness; that he might allure and draw us up to himself, and make us, as St. Peter expresseth it, partakers of the Divine nature."*

* Sermon preached before the House of Commons, March, 1647.

Few are the fundamental elements of the Gospel, and these, though profoundly mysterious in themselves, are eminently simple in their structure. Designed to operate vitally rather than intellectually, as a spiritual presence and power more than as an elaborate system of doctrinal positions, Christianity has little of the logical arrangement and artificial regularity that are common to works of human genius and labour. It is not a digest of principles to facilitate speculation, nor a treatise on morals to determine the nature of virtue; it is not a collection of maxims to regulate the conduct, nor a summary of counsels to assist the devotion. In a special sense and with certain limitations it is all these, but only as they are included in its wider scope, and contained in its grander idea. Mainly and essentially the Gospel is a method of Divine operation for the recovery of our race to virtue and happiness,—an economy of truth and grace intended, as by its wondrous adaptation to human nature it is fitted, to raise the soul of man from its fall, to animate its corrupted mass with the spirit of a new life, and to impress upon it, with more than the heavenly beauty of its first reflection, the image of its Creator. For this reason it admits, as indeed it requires, “ordinances of divine service.” Its design cannot be realised by abstract meditation and learned study. These are the occupation of only a small number: they have also less to do with the conscience than with the intellect; and, however necessary to the understanding of difficult questions, have but little power to quicken into spiritual life those who are dead in trespasses and sins. Simpler means are called for, and means giving a readier access to the treasures of wisdom and knowledge laid up in Christ. Outward offices and duties are needed to arrest the attention *and impress the heart*, to develop a sense of want and serve

as conditions of supply. Human sluggishness demands a stimulus, and human infirmity a help, as Divine truth requires a ministry, and Divine grace a medium. Without these the Gospel will never find its way to the conscience, and prove itself the power of God unto salvation. There must be observances of periodical occurrence and occasions of spiritual communication, the former passing into the latter by the obedience which converts them into "times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord."

The necessity thus existing is amply met in the institutes and ordinances of Christianity. With diversities of gifts there are differences of administrations, and though a beautiful simplicity, not to say economy, distinguishes the appointments of the Saviour as Head of the Church, yet nothing is wanting, either of agency or office, for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ. Of these appointments Baptism and the Lord's Supper are among the most remarkable and important. Singularly precise and definite in their origin, they are also pre-eminently peculiar in their character and use. "They are symbols, and not truth,"*—strictly positive institutions, depending for their existence on mere authority, —not essential to the simple conception of the Gospel, but instrumental to its main design. They are in truth forms symbolically expressive of its fundamental facts and verities, and means by which a personal interest in its benefits is publicly recognised, and oneness with Christ in fellowship with his disciples is ostensibly enjoyed.

These institutions were established by the Divine Founder of our Faith towards the close of his earthly ministry; the one the evening preceding his death, the other shortly before his ascension. "When the hour was come, he sat

* Σύμβολα ταῦτα ἀλλὰ οὐκ ἀλήθεια. Maximus. Scholiast.

down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you.* Having been declared the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead, the Saviour, when he had spoken to "the apostles whom he had chosen of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," sent them forth with this commission, "Go ye, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."† Such is the divinely inspired account of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Baptism, it is true, had frequently been administered under the sanction of our Lord previous to this appointment of it. Early in his career it is said (though at a time when the Forerunner had almost "fulfilled his course"), "that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John." But as before this we read of no express terms of institution; as the Redeemer manifested on various occasions a marked solicitude to avoid an open avowal of himself as the Messiah, even charging "his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ;" as, moreover, the economy of redemption was still historically incomplete,

* Luke xxii. 14, 20. † Matthew xxviii. 19, 20.

wanting the very facts which gave to the rite its greatest significance,—baptism could not, in such cases, be comprehensively and distinctively Christian baptism. Unquestionably deficient in the expression of purely evangelical ideas, it was probably like that of John the Baptist, preliminary and prospective, a baptism unto repentance rather than unto remission of sins, designed as a preparation for the kingdom of heaven as at hand, rather than as an entrance into it as a kingdom already set up. Intended as the sign of initiation into the covenant of grace in its most matured and perfect form, the ordinance could not acquire its full meaning and perform its proper office, until that covenant was ratified by the death and resurrection of the Son of God. And hence, we infer, that it assumed the character of a strictly Christian institution, precise in its application, and specific in its authority, only under the commission solemnly intrusted to the apostles, to make disciples of all nations, and to preach the Gospel to every creature. “So many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ,” says the apostle, “were baptized *into his death*”; which at least implies, that not until the Saviour’s sacrifice was the baptism complete in its whole design.

From a very early period of the Church both ordinances have been known by the general name of Sacraments, but at the first only in common with a number of other solemnities, to which the same distinction was given. To this term a strong objection has been taken by those who are zealous for a literal adherence to scriptural nomenclature and apostolic usage. The term, it is said, is purely human, having no foundation in the word of God; it is also wanting in propriety and precision, as it does not fitly describe the observances to which it is applied; it is, moreover, unhappy in its associations, being connected by

peculiar use with a doctrine which teaches that the rites themselves are, through a secret virtue imparted to them, effectual conveyances of Divine grace. Names however are not things, and once generally adopted, it is scarcely possible, even if expedient, to supplant or abolish them. Besides, the want of scriptural authority for Sacrament, is an objection which may be pleaded with equal success against a number of other terms, employed to represent the fundamental verities of the Christian revelation. Its inaptitude also, if by this is meant its inadequacy to set forth the whole idea of the rite, is a defect which belongs to almost every single expression by which the ordinances are separately distinguished; while its connexion with the theory of Sacramental efficacy—of grace by means of priestly intervention—is an accident for which the word itself is in no respect accountable. But if the alleged objections were of greater weight than they appear to be, they would hardly prevail against the use of a term, which all but universal adoption has rendered convenient, which systematic theology now demands as little less than a necessity, and which the ordinary intercourse of religious life has made a definitely intelligible and familiar expression.

The term itself, in its original form of *sacramentum*, was used by the Romans to denote the pledge deposited in court by parties at law, binding them to accept the decision of the judge, and was afterwards transferred to the oath taken by the Roman soldiers to be faithful to their chief. It may indeed in a more general sense have been employed for any sacred ceremony involving the obligation of a religious engagement, preserving in this the meaning of its verb *sacrare*, to consecrate, solemnize, ratify, &c., as *juramentum*, an oath, conforms to the meaning of *jurare*,

to swear. Enlisted in the service of Christianity, it was adopted, on what ground it is difficult to say, as the Latin representative of the Greek word *mystery*; and both terms, though by no means mutually interchangeable, were used, the one by the Greek and the other by the Latin fathers, for almost every religious observance of unusual solemnity, without specific reference to the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.* In the Vulgate translation of the Holy Scriptures this substitution of one word for the other takes place indiscriminately. Nebuchadnezzar's dream, which in our version is called a secret, in Greek is styled a *mystery*, and in Latin a *sacrament*. In the following instances also, "the mystery of his will," "the mystery of godliness," "the mystery of the seven stars," "the mystery of the woman," *sacramentum* is given as the synonyme of *mysterium*.† By degrees restriction took the place of a vague and uncertain generality; the loose and variable use of the term gave way to an application more fixed and precise, until in the end it became appropriated exclusively to the positive institutions of the Christian church. The term Sacrament is thus purely human in its origin, but human with the sanction of the accumulated ecclesiastical authority of many centuries in its favour. Familiar with the

* The term was also indefinitely applied to types and parables, to things of which the meaning was veiled in "dark sayings," and to those of which the existence was naturally undiscoverable by human reason. "Augustine hath nothing more familiar in him than *Sacramenta Scripturarum*, the Sacraments of the Scriptures; whereby he understandeth the dark speeches and spiritual meanings of the Holy Ghost." Calfhill's *Answer to Martiell*. Parker Soc., p. 235. "In the writings of the ancient Fathers," says Hooker, "all articles of religion which are peculiar to Christian faith, all duties of religion containing that which sense or natural reason cannot of itself discern, are most commonly named Sacraments." *Eccles. Pol.* B. V. c. 1.

† Daniel ii. 18, 30. Ephes. i. 9. 1 Tim. iii. 16. Rev. i. 20; xvii. 7.

word "mysteries" as applied to the more sacred forms of heathen worship,—those especially to which only the initiated were admitted,—the Greek Christians adopted it as a fitting designation of religious observances more than usually solemn and affecting, particularly those from which the ungodly were purposely shut out; and afterwards, in accordance with the more limited use of the expression in those places of the New Testament where it signifies the hidden sense of the external sign, as in Rev. i. 20, "the mystery of the seven stars" (that is, the sense hidden under the symbol), they narrowed it to the comprehension of only a small number of ceremonies, applying it, however, in a reference of peculiar and special import to the two symbolic rites of Christianity. Their example was followed by the Latins, who, selecting *sacramentum* as the representative of the Greek word *μυστηριον*, employed it first with equal latitude, and subsequently with a corresponding limitation.

At the Council of Trent it was authoritatively determined that the Sacraments were seven in number. The "holy synod" decreed: "If any one shall say, that the Sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord; or, that they are more or less than seven, to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Orders, and Matrimony; or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a Sacrament; let him be anathema." Corresponding to this is the pretence of sevenfold grace imparted to bishops at their consecration, founded on the frequent mention of this mystic number in the Scriptures, but particularly on the supposed promise of seven distinct gifts to Jesus Christ in the words of the prophet: "The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, *the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge*

and of the fear of the Lord." Seven is a sacred number, and in times of prevalent superstition would be likely to possess a powerful charm. Its frequent use in the word of God, especially in connexion with the Church and the Spirit, would probably have some influence in determining its selection for the Sacraments. As early as the twelfth century this specific number is met with, though not as formally established, in the writings of one of the most zealous religious teachers of the age. Speaking of this period, Neander observes, "The practice of the Church had already given sanction to the hypothesis, that the Sacraments were all comprised under the sacred number *seven*. It only remained that the various other holy signs, to which it had been accustomed to apply the name of Sacraments, should be excluded, and the number seven more distinctly fixed. This was done in the present period, when the idea of the Sacrament came to be more exactly and sharply defined by scientific theology. In the instructions given by Bishop Otto of Bamberg to persons newly baptized, in the year 1124, the determinate number of seven Sacraments is mentioned for the first time."*

For this particular number a kind of doctrinal necessity was alleged, grounded in a scheme which, giving to personal Christianity a division of separate periods and distinct relationships, demanded for each a discriminating Sacrament, to serve at once as an outward sign to represent, and an efficient instrumentality to originate it. "The peculiar form of the religious spirit in these times," continues Neander, "craved for everything some medium of sensuous representation; and this was not to be a mere symbol, but must be objectively manifested, as the bearer of Divine powers. Thus, in the first place, the birth to a spiritual life is repre-

* Church Hist. Vol. VII. 435.—Bonn.

sented by Baptism ; next growth to maturity, by Confirmation ; finally, nutriment, in order to the preservation of life and strength, by the Lord's Supper. This would suffice, were not man subject in his bodily and spiritual life to manifold defects and disturbances. Diseases require their appropriate remedies. Answering to the recovery of health, is Penance ; to the promotion of re-convalescence, by means of appropriate diet and exercise, the Extreme Unction. Furthermore, as man belongs, both in a physical and spiritual sense, to some society, so the efficiency of the Sacraments must extend also to this relation ; thus ordination and marriage obtain their appropriate place."*

The theory which invests the Sacraments with the power to communicate spiritual benefits we shall afterwards consider: it concerns us only to remark at present, that for the determinate number of seven, as first specified in the theology of the middle ages, and subsequently fixed by the decree of the Tridentine Council, there is no scriptural authority whatever. True, it is possible so to enlarge the definition of Sacrament as to furnish a basis broad enough, not only for the five additional ceremonies of the Roman Church, but also for the numerous rites and symbols denominated Sacraments by the writers of the fourth and following centuries. But no description of Sacrament, which correctly sets forth the nature and design of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, can be given, which will include any one of those observances which popery has exalted to a similar rank, and honoured with the same appellation. If, for instance, Sacraments are viewed as federal acts, and defined as visible stipulations and solemn professions of the Christian Faith, this is obviously a character which cannot with any propriety be ascribed to them. Or if to a Sacra-

* Church His. Vol. VII. 466.—ВОНН.

ment it be essential to have a symbolic outward element and a verbal form of institution, these are attributes which are equally wanting to every ordinance, save the two respecting which there is no dispute. Matrimony, Orders, and Penance,—if by Penance is meant repentance,—have, though very differently from Baptism and the Eucharist, the written word, but not the symbolising element; while Confirmation and Extreme Unction have neither. Ordination and Matrimony are undoubtedly Divine institutions; but the former is limited to a very small number, and the latter belongs of natural right to the race; so that neither can strictly be called a Sacrament of the *Church*. But, in truth, Ordination is simply the orderly appointment of qualified men to be “good ministers of Jesus Christ,” and has neither the formal establishment, nor the general application, nor the under-lying principle, with its characteristic emblem, indispensable to a true Christian Sacrament. In the case of Timothy, a *gift* is said to have been imparted by the laying on of hands, but this was a miraculous endowment communicated by those who were themselves miraculously gifted, and, since the age of apostles and miracles is past, can furnish neither precedent nor promise to us.* Matrimony, though consecrated and ennobled by Christianity, is not of itself a Christian institution, having existed by Divine appointment from the beginning; and though denominated by St. Paul a mystery, and hence, in the Vulgate, a Sacrament, yet the real mystery intended is not the union of the sexes, but the union of Christ and his people,—the deep spiritual idea veiled and hidden under the marriage relation. This is sufficiently apparent from the words: “This is a great mystery; but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” So that if mystery mean

* 1 Tim. iv. 14. 2 Tim. i. 6.

Sacrament, that which the apostle calls a Sacrament is not **Matrimony**, but the spiritual connexion, founded on mutual love subsisting between the Saviour and his people.

Penance and **Confirmation**, except as one is the turning unto God of an unconverted sinner, and the other the establishment in the faith of a weak believer, have not even the semblance of a foundation in the written word. The former is called a Sacrament by which sins committed after **Baptism** are forgiven, and is said to consist in contrition, confession, and satisfaction,—the confession being made to the priest, and the satisfaction being such as he may appoint. There is no such Sacrament. The whole is a purely human invention. God it is true commandeth all men everywhere to repent, and every conscience attests the justness of the command; but his words cannot be construed into a requirement to confess to the Priest, or to atone for delinquency by works prescribed on his authority. Sins committed against God must be confessed to Him alone, as by Him alone, without the pretended satisfaction of meritorious obedience, can they be forgiven. "I acknowledged," says David, "my sin unto *Thee*, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto *the Lord*; and *Thou* forgavest the iniquity of my sin." Penance is of man. The word is not a true interpretation of the Divine requirement; it does not correctly represent the term in which God expresses his will. Repentance is what he enjoins, and this repentance is of a kind to forbid the slightest implication or the barest possibility of merit in the act. It is simply, as the Greek word denotes, that change of mind which practically leads to a reformation of the conduct—the after-thought and self-reflection, of which the immediate fruit is conviction of sin, and amendment of life.

Confirmation is no more a Sacrament than Penance. It is not even a separate institution, as it rests on neither Scriptural precept nor example. Paul and Barnabas, it is true, "confirmed the souls of the disciples at Lystra and Antioch," and the former "went through Syria and Cilicia confirming the churches:" he also "went over all the country of Galatia and Phrygia in order, strengthening (confirming) all the disciples;" but this the two apostles did not by the imposition of hands or the signature of the cross, but by their presence and prayers, their counsels and consolations, by "exhorting them," as Luke distinctly testifies, "to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God."* Their design, therefore, was not to establish an ordinance but to discharge a duty, not to perform a ceremony but, by speaking that which is good to the use of edifying, to minister grace unto the hearers. Considered in its sacramental character, there is if possible still less authority for Confirmation. As practised by the laying on of hands and the anointing of oil, under the pretence of imparting grace to the subject, it is not only destitute of foundation, but is a mockery, a delusion, and a snare. It begets a faith without truth and a hope without object, blinds by an assumption it cannot sustain, and deceives by a promise it cannot fulfil. That the apostles communicated the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands to newly baptized disciples, as in the case of the Samaritans and Ephesians,† though pleaded in justification, offers neither vindication nor apology for the service. The ceremony had reference not to children to confirm them in the faith, but to adults to qualify them by supernatural endowments for extraordinary duties; for on receiving the Holy Ghost "they spake with tongues, and prophesied."

* Acts, xiv. 22 xv. 41 xviii. 23. † Acts, viii, 15—17. xix 5, 6.

The gift imparted was special, partial, and temporary. It was not grace for personal edification, but power for ministerial efficiency. It was not given commonly to all, but discriminatingly to some; to those, probably, whom the Holy Spirit thought fit to consecrate to a particular work. The communication was not made by anointing with oil, nor even, on its own account, by the laying on of hands. The former is not so much as mentioned, and cannot on any possible supposition be implied, while the latter, though distinctly specified, is accompanied, in the case of the Samaritans, with the statement, that Peter and John "*Prayed* for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost." The whole was peculiar and extraordinary; the gift belonged to the age of miracles, and the ceremony of bestowing it to the office of the apostles; and both therefore ceased when the age expired, and the office became extinct.

Extreme Unction is the last of the five Sacraments added by the Romish Church to the number established by Jesus Christ. This is called the sacrament of the dying, and its intention is to fortify the soul for its conflict with the last enemy, and prepare it for the solemnities of the future state. That the sinner when he comes to die has pressing need of forgiveness, and that the christian in like circumstances is peculiarly in want of heavenly ministrations, few would be impious enough to deny; but that a special Sacrament, applicable only to this crisis, should be instituted for the conveyance of these blessings, is a theory for which, as there is no apparent necessity, so there is no probable or even conceivable ground. These spiritual communications have their appointed conditions in the general economy of Divine mercy, apart from which no one at any time has the least encouragement to expect them. But as these conditions *apply not* particularly to either health or sickness, but

generally to both, and therefore to the hour of death equally as to any other period, all supplementary conditions are for this reason not only superfluous but, by the false dependence generated by them, absolutely pernicious. The momentous importance of the occasion is no argument for a speciality of institution, but only for a speciality of personal devotedness.

The Scriptural authority pleaded for this pretended Sacrament is the following passage in James v. 14, 15.: "Is any sick among you? Let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: and the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him." This is surely a slender foundation on which to establish an ordinance of such marvellous virtue as Extreme Unction. The salvation promised in answer to the prayer of faith is obviously recovery from sickness, and the forgiveness assured is particularly that of sins (as in the case of the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xii. 29, 30, and of the man afflicted with paralysis, Matt. ix. 2.), on account of which the sickness has taken place. To this twofold benefit to the sick brother three things are required of the elders visiting him, prayer, anointing, and faith. The faith, be it observed, must be theirs as well as the anointing and prayer, which suggests that the object of it must be temporal and not spiritual, as the reception of spiritual blessings depends supremely on the faith of the individual himself. Now, among the powers miraculously imparted to the apostles and some of the first christians, were faith and the gifts of healing. "To one," says Paul, enumerating these *charismata*, "is given faith by the same spirit; to another the gifts of healing." (1 Cor. xii. 9.) This faith was a power of

removing mountains, that is, of accomplishing things of stupendous difficulty, and even of natural impossibility. It was by a faith of this kind that the lame man, at the Beautiful Gate, was healed: "And his name through (our) faith in his name, hath made this man strong." (Acts iii. 16.) The power of healing was sometimes exercised through the intervention of means. Our Lord himself, in opening the eyes of the blind, first anointed them with clay. The apostles also accompanied the use of their gift with oil. As oil was both medicinal and symbolical, soothing irritation and typifying spiritual comfort, it was frequently employed even in cases of miraculous restoration. Hence of the twelve, when executing their commission to "heal the sick," it is said, "they anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them." (Mark vi. 13.)

Now apply these facts to the exposition of the passage before us, and its meaning will be obvious. A member of the Church falls sick. This sickness may be the result and special reward of particular sins. He is directed to send for the elders, not one but more, of the Church. In the complementary distribution of miraculous endowments, one of these has the gift of healing, another the power of faith, or the same may possibly have both. These powers are to be exercised conjointly, and with a view to the same object; and thus exercised, with prayer to give them acceptance and effect, the result shall be recovery from sickness and the forgiveness of sins. In this interpretation the difficulty of the text entirely disappears, but the so-called Sacrament of the dying disappears also with it. The whole service prescribed by the apostle is evidently of an extraordinary character, belonging exclusively to an age of miraculous communication, and, therefore, furnishing little instruction *for after procedure*, and no authority for a Christian ordi-

nance. But even were it otherwise, or were it impossible to give a satisfactory view of the passage, Extreme Unction would derive no countenance from it, as the anointing which it requires is for the *recovery*, while that of the Roman Church is for the *death*, of the patient.

The five additional Sacraments of the Council of Trent are thus without foundation in the word of God. Christ and his apostles knew nothing about them. Some of the fathers may have mentioned them, as, according to their loose application of the term, they mention many others; but few, if any, regard them as of equal or similar rank with Baptism and the Lord's Supper. If they did, their testimony, weighed against Scripture, would be "counted as the small dust of the balance." The authority of men, though learned and pious, is worthless, when set against the authority of God; and tradition, valuable in its own subordinate sphere, becomes unmixedly pernicious when employed to propound a doctrine, or establish an ordinance. The Bible, the Bible alone is the religion of Protestants, and by all who ground their faith exclusively in its teachings, the term Sacrament, as that which is properly understood by it, is restricted to the two rites of Baptism and the Supper of the Lord. "Our Lord," says Augustine, "has not burdened us with signs; but He and His apostles have given us few instead of many, and these are in celebration most easy, in import most excellent, and in observance most holy: such are the Sacraments of Baptism, and the celebration of the body and blood of our Lord."† To no other ordinance or

† Dominus signis nos non oneravit; sed quaedam paucæ pro multis, eademque factu facillima, et intellectu angustissima et observatione castissima, Ipse Dominus et apostolica tradidit disciplina: sicut est Baptismi sacramentum, et celebratio corporis et sanguinis Domini. De Doctrina Christiana, Lib. III., Cap. IX.

solemnity than these can a sacramental character be ascribed, except by such a licence of definition as allows their just meaning to escape in the vagueness of a general term. They alone have the attributes of simplicity and universality, which accord so well with the scope and intention of the Gospel, and of them only can be it said, that they are symbolical of redeeming truth, and confirmatory of the everlasting covenant.

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CHAPTER II.

THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF THE SACRAMENTS.

Respecting the nature and design of the Sacraments, there is, even among Protestants themselves, a considerable difference of opinion. This difference extends along the whole line of Protestant theology, from the fundamental deficiencies of Socinianism, to the unauthorised and mischievous additions of Anglo-Catholicism. It thus touches the two extremes of doctrinal position, as represented by the chief religious communities of our day. Such a diversity was to be expected, not only as the natural growth of the free development of human thought, but also as the logical consequence of the different views held by individual churches, or of great sections of the same church, of the leading doctrines of the Gospel, and of the peculiar functions of its ministry. In this diversity (presuming as it does an element of opposition to every particular theory), it may be difficult to affirm with certainty what is the true Scriptural character of these ordinances; but perhaps, as in most similar cases, the correct description will be found to lie somewhere midway between the two extremes within which the several varieties of existing belief are contained. There, at least, is the place where we shall endeavour to find it. We believe that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are, generally, as to their historical import, *Monuments of important Facts*; but, specifically, as to their evangelical intention, *Symbols of saving Truth*; and *Seals of the everlasting Covenant*.

I.

Monuments of important Facts. This view is rather incidental than imperative. It considers the rites not in their primitive and essential, but in their acquired and historical meaning. It identifies them with the external evidences of Christianity, and gives them the value of a separate testimony in the general proof of its Divine origin.

It is the natural suggestion of a reflective mind to preserve the memory of an interesting fact, by means of a sensible object specially set apart to mark its occurrence. This, true of all times, is more particularly so of those early periods of society, in which the simplicity of social life almost forbids the variety of grand and striking incident, and a young but growing civilization, rich only in the seeds of things to come, has scarcely learnt the art of consecutively telling its own story. Hence, in most ages and countries, institutions have been established and monuments raised to signalise events which virtue or patriotism has thought deserving of honourable remembrance. By no people was this custom more generally observed than by the Jews, as nearly every momentous circumstance in their history received its appropriate record, in the founding of some religious solemnity, or the erection of some perpetuating memorial. It was thus Jacob preserved the memory of his midnight struggle with the angel of the Lord, by calling the place of his triumph *PENIEL, the face of God*, "for," said he, "I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." The wondrous fact was made to have an ever-attesting witness in the very geographical nomenclature of the country. It was thus also the passage of Israel through Jordan was celebrated, by the setting up of twelve stones taken from the bed of the river, as a *commemorative pile* declaring to future generations, that "Israel

came over this Jordan on dry land." In like manner the extraordinary victory of the Israelites over the Philistines, after they had been reduced to the greatest extremity, and almost to utter annihilation, had an enduring register in the stone set between Mizpeh and Shen, mutely repeating in its very name the common utterance of the whole people as they confessed: "Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."

But it was in covenant transactions, as in the case of Abraham and Abimelech, and Jacob and Laban,* that this ceremony acquired its most special significance. On such occasions the Divine Being himself not unfrequently lent to the custom the sanction of his own example; and the instances of its adoption by him generally serve the double purpose of memorial and of symbol. Of this we have a beautiful instance in the covenant made with Noah, after the general flood, that the earth should no more be destroyed by water. Of this covenant the rainbow, perhaps at the very time spanning the darkened heaven, was selected as the token and the pledge. The singular propriety of this selection is seen in the fact, that the phenomenon itself illustrates the truth of the promise to which it points; as its existence, requiring that the cloud be *partial*, is incompatible with *universal* deluge from above. As often then as this bow is set in the cloud, it is symbolically, as well as by appointment, a Divine memorandum of the original covenant, and, like a fresh utterance from the throne of God, it repeats to "every living creature of all flesh," that "the waters shall no more become a flood to destroy the earth." A further example is given in the covenant of still deeper meaning and richer mercy established with Abraham. To him, as to his "friend," Jehovah said, "I am the Almighty God; walk before me and be thou perfect. And I will estab-

* Gen. xxi, 22, 24—xxxi, 44—54.

lish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee." This Divine transaction, so fruitful of future blessedness to the race, was signalized by the appointment of circumcision as its perpetuating and expository emblem. Administered as well to the posterity of the patriarch as to himself, and denoting, in its higher reference, the "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh," it became at once a continual remembrancer of the covenant itself, and a visible interpretation of its spiritual design. The fact of its existence was written, impressed as a seal, in the very flesh of the people. Every male child bore it about with him, and in turn transferred it to his offspring, until the commemorative signa-
ture, multiplied by repetition to a number outvying the stars of heaven, rose to the sublime attestation of a whole nation of witnesses, that "the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance."

Resembling these, both as monument and type, was the solemnity of the Passover. Of this festival, the most suggestive and striking of all the Jewish feasts, redemption was the central and pervading idea. But this redemption was twofold, physical and spiritual, national and universal. Of the one kind the paschal observance was historical, of the other it was prophetic. In its allusion to the future it anticipated the fulness of the time, and spoke with emphatic distinctness of the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world. In its reference to the past it called up the memory of the mighty hand and stretched-out arm of the Lord, when, "having smitten the first-born of Egypt, he brought forth his people with joy, and his chosen with gladness." To commemorate this deliverance was the *immediate object* of its institution, and to ensure its solemn

recognition by succeeding generations, it was commanded to be observed as an ordinance for ever. "This day," said Jehovah, "shall be unto you for a memorial: ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever. And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the Sacrifice of the Lord's Passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses."*

Now the two great ordinances of Christianity, administered without interruption for a long succession of ages, have assumed this monumental character; and, standing in the church like pillars commemorative of the principal facts of the evangelical history, they serve as confirmations of our faith in the genuineness and truth of the Gospel records. The Lord's Supper had by special appointment this historical significance from the beginning, as it was instituted for the very purpose of showing the Lord's death till he come; and Baptism, though not professedly enjoined in celebration of any particular event, yet being the outward sign of that Divine baptism which was promised as the distinguishing privilege of the New Dispensation, and its first administration under the command to baptize all nations, taking place immediately after the Holy Spirit was actually poured out, it became, as if by design, the fitting memorial of that extraordinary visitation;—the memorial, so it may be called, of the Christian Pentecost, bearing on its front as an indelible inscription the united voice of the apostles to the multitudes at Jerusalem, "This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy

* Exodus, xii. 14, 26, 27.

Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear." Considered in this light the two ordinances become solid and enduring monuments, and hence a visible and continuous authentication, of the two primary facts of which the pre-eminently saving doctrines of the Gospel are but the natural exposition,—the death of Christ and the descent of the Spirit. They thus meet, in a certain sense, and with at least sufficient directness, the demand of that infidelity which, like Jewish scepticism, requires a sign, and to every denial of their testimony suggest the challenge to account for their origin on any other supposition than the occurrence of the events to which they relate.

And how shall this challenge be responded to? What document shall be searched to find the primitive hint, or what tradition analysed to discover the pregnant germ, of the Christian Sacraments? Whence came the Lord's Supper, if there was no incarnate God to institute, and no atoning death to commemorate? Whence originated Baptism into the name of the Trinity, if there was no risen Saviour to appoint, and no miraculous effusion of grace to symbolise? At what time, and by whom were the singular rites introduced, if not when He was made flesh and dwelt among us, by the only begotten of the Father? When and how did the myths, if myths they are, which lie at their basis, pass out of the region of fable, and receive the acknowledgment of authentic and veritable history? To these questions there is no answer. The unbeliever is silenced. He has no reply satisfactory even to himself to offer; and yet perhaps he is not convinced. His unbelief, indeed, has a deeper seat than the intellect, and therefore requires for its destruction a greater power than logic. Evidence in the department of religious truth operates according to the state of the heart. Knowledge is posterior to

feeling, and life precedes conception. Hence both faith and unbelief lie more in the affections and the will than in the understanding and judgment. Failing however to convince the sceptic, the outward rites of Christianity are powerful to confirm the believer. They find in his characteristic disposition a point of ready attachment and sympathy. They meet him at every stage of his religious career, but especially before the principles of Divine truth have acquired their full ascendancy over his mind,—when infidelity artfully insinuates its objections, and with manifest contempt of his judgment scornfully demands a reason of the hope that is in him,—when the suggestions of a speculative temper combined with things hard to be understood in the written word involve him in temporary perplexity and doubt, and the father of lies, taking advantage of this transient suspension of confidence, endeavours by secret operations to originate and fix within him an evil heart of unbelief; and, demonstrating by evidence which equally impresses the senses and addresses the reason, that the Gospel is not a cunningly devised fable, they serve to establish, strengthen, and settle him, to give him a greater purchase and hold of “the foundation of God which standeth sure,” and thus to prepare him to engage in their observance with a true heart in full assurance of faith.

II.

Symbols or signs of saving Truth. Under this description the Sacraments assume their original and eminently instructive character. Generally they may be called signs of Divine grace, speaking to the senses in symbolic language of that grace of God which bringeth salvation to all men; but specifically they may be regarded as signs of particular doctrines, presenting to the eye, under significant emblems,

that truth which is most directly and powerfully operative to the saving of the soul.

Man, considered as a fallen creature, lies beneath a two-fold curse. He is equally under the condemnation of immutable law, and the paralyzing influence of degenerate affections. In the former condition, the sentence of death is formally recorded against him ; in the latter, he is without the power to escape from its infliction. In the one case he is immediately the object of that wrath of God which is revealed from 'heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men ; in the other he is the victim of a depravity which not only leaves him impotent to work out his own salvation, but operates like a self-executing law to the punishment of his sin, in the everlasting death of his soul. To meet, with a view to his redemption from all iniquity, these separate though related conditions, an arrangement of extraordinary peculiarity and of vast comprehension was required. Considering him as a transgressor of the law, a scheme of atonement, involving the mediation of incarnate Deity, was necessary, the effect of which should be to declare the righteousness of God in the remission of his sins, and to reconcile to one great result,—the manifestation of the Divine glory,—the design to save, and the obligation to punish. Viewing him as depraved in nature, a quickening and sanctifying operation was demanded, an operation which, originating with an agency external to himself, and carried on without the slightest disturbance of the constitutional order and voluntary exercise of his powers, should result in his perfect restoration to the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.

Now these requirements are fully met in the economy of the Gospel, the one in the death of the Son of God as *man's Representative* and Substitute, and the other in the

life-giving influences of the Holy Spirit as the Spirit of grace and truth. The death of Jesus Christ and the effusion of the Holy Spirit are the prominent and essential facts of Christianity, and the doctrines of atonement and of sanctifying spiritual influence resulting from them, are its fundamental and redeeming truths. Of the facts, the institutions of Baptism and the Eucharist are monumental evidences; of the doctrines, they are the outward and visible *signs*.

As these doctrines belong to "the first principles of the oracles of God," enter into the very essence and determine the whole character of the Gospel; as they relate with direct and special application to man's condition as a sinner, and furnish the only truth which can really save him; as, moreover, they are just the doctrines which the depraved self-sufficiency of the human heart would naturally be under the greatest temptation to forget, or emasculate in a rationalistic interpretation; it seemed alike desirable and necessary to distinguish them by a method of representation peculiar to themselves,—not only to signalize their importance but to illustrate their meaning, and even to facilitate their intended operation, by presenting them before the view with a prominence that would command attention, and addressing them to the heart with a directness that would kindle emotion. Hence the Divine Founder of our Faith, in giving them intelligible and permanent expression, has adopted a twofold manner, and to the ordinary mode of verbal instruction has added the striking peculiarity of symbolical presentation. He has not only taught them with articulate distinctness in every variety of appropriate language, but set them forth with vivid illustration in eminently suggestive and solemn observances. In the two positive institutions denominated Sacraments he has given them an outward shape and visible reality; at

least, he has impressed upon material elements and sensible forms a language which speaks of them, mutely but powerfully, to our very senses. He has thus at once asserted their importance and consulted our infirmity by bringing them within the whole sphere of our intelligence, giving them access by almost every possible avenue to the understanding and the heart, and, especially, by making that part of our nature which is conversant only with external objects the means of contributing to our just conception of their character, and our deep experience of their power.

At the institution of His Supper, our Lord "took bread and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* We are thus taught, by its great Author himself, the representative and symbolical character of this ordinance. No such change in the elements is intimated as to countenance the dogma of their conversion into the actual person, human and divine, of the Son of God. The Redeemer does not with solemn formality take bread and wine specially prepared for the purpose, and, pronouncing upon them certain magical words, declare that their substance is changed, the one into his body and the other into his blood. There is no service of consecration, suggesting a profoundly mysterious process, by which even the suspicion of such a result could be awakened in the minds of those present. The ordinary bread and wine of the Passover are taken, and the familiar manner of their distribution passes into the act of designating the feast to another and a higher

* Matt. xxvi. 26. 27. 28.

use, investing it with a character corresponding to the new form which the Kingdom of God was about to assume, and converting it from a Jewish to a purely Christian commemoration.

As to the words, "this is my body, this is my blood," had it been the intention of Jesus Christ to give them an absolutely literal sense, he would undoubtedly, seeing all visible appearances were against it, have expressed himself with a clearness and precision that would have prevented the possibility of losing his meaning in a figurative construction of his language. And had the disciples so understood him, the extraordinary singularity of the doctrine, and the all but impossibility of apprehending it even as a question of simple faith, would have led them, as on other occasions of much inferior difficulty, to wonder at the "hard saying," and request a further explanation of its perplexing mystery. Very remarkable also, though exceedingly instructive, is it, that in their subsequent epistles, written under the plenary inspiration of the Spirit, and containing, as the last expression of the mind of Christ, the doctrinal exposition of the Gospel histories, there is no interpretation of the Saviour's words which suggests a doubt of their metaphorical application, or lends the sanction of even an ambiguous phrase to the dogma of transubstantiation. But, in the absence of these considerations, it appears plainly impossible that the disciples either did or could construe the language of their Master in a literal sense, as at the time of its utterance he was before them in his corporeal presence. It would be an exploit of fancy transcending all other exploits, or a miracle of faith eclipsing all other miracles, to persuade themselves that they were at the same time feasting on the Son of God and holding friendly converse with him, looking into his benignant

countenance and listening to his loving discourse, and yet eating his very flesh and drinking his very blood. The difficulty of such a persuasion would be heightened by the character of the solemnity they had just concluded, and the obvious relation and similarity of the new festival to the old. Immediately on the termination of the Jewish the Christian supper was instituted. The same bread and wine were used, a similar form of blessing was observed, and the like mode of distribution was adopted. The old passed directly and with beautiful adjustment into the new. Unless, then, special instruction had been given to the contrary, or a form of language employed of which no grammatical authority could be pleaded for the misinterpretation, the disciples would naturally infer that the second institution, resembling the first in so many things, resembled it also in this, that it was eminently commemorative and symbolical.

Transubstantiation itself, considered as a doctrine addressed to our reason and faith, involves this principle (a principle which, had it not the plea of antiquity, of elaborate and learned defence, and of professed belief by millions of individuals, it would be simply curious to define), that the ordinary properties of a substance, the properties which universal experience and an unquestionable philosophy demand as essential to its very existence, continue unchanged, and yet that the substance itself is no longer with them, being converted into another substance altogether different; as if one should say of a crystal that its distinctive attributes of shape, weight, and transparency remain clearly cognisable by the senses and intelligible to the reason, and yet the solid, lustrous, inorganic body has substantially passed over *from a crystal to a chrysalis*. It thus implies not only that *substance is* conceivable as distinct from its properties, but

that the one may be extracted from the other without affecting it; that the substance may be wholly changed, while all that assures to us its existence and reveals to us its character continues the same; that, in fact, the accidents which can be conceived as existing only as they inhere in the substance which they represent to our intelligence have, nevertheless, an existence in themselves, and in the very absence of that of which they are only the sensible qualities; or, in other words, that properties, the necessary condition of whose existence it is to be the attributes of some substance, do actually exist where the substance of which they are attributes exists no longer: as if the Israelites in eating the Paschal Supper should say of the unleavened bread and bitter herbs which belonged to the Feast, "The bread has all the qualities of bread, and the herbs preserve their form and flavour; still they are no longer bread and herbs; the accidents have been separated from their substance and transferred to another substance, the flesh and blood of the slain lamb." In this statement, indeed, there would be less violence offered to our reason than in that view of the Saviour's words which makes him to affirm that the material elements which he held in his hand and gave to his disciples were his flesh and blood, his soul and divinity; as in this case there is not the convenience of a slain lamb, but the difficulty of a living presence and a personal agency, with the still further difficulty arising from the obligation to believe that meat and drink are transmuted not only into another substance but into a different essence, not only into spirit even, but also into divinity.

The same subtlety of intellect however, it is right to observe, which can separate accident from subject, and grasp them each as an independent reality, has sought escape

from the grosser idea of transubstantiation by affirming that the pronoun *this*, in the sentence, *this is my body*, does not refer to the bread, though it was during its presentation the Redeemer pronounced the words, but to something else, ideal or real, which by a miracle of omnipotence becomes to the recipient the veritable body and blood of the Son of God. "They say," remarks Bishop Jewel, in his controversy with Mr. Harding, "this pronoun *hoc*, 'this,' signifieth not 'this bread,' as all the old writers understand it, but *individuum vagum*, which is neither bread nor any determinate thing else but only one certain thing at large in generality."* Dr. Wiseman, with more precision, tells us, "Christ does not say, 'bread is my body,' 'wine is my blood,' which in point of construction would have brought these words within a possibility of comparison with 'the seven kine are seven years,' or, 'the horns, kings.' But he says, '*this* is my body,' 'this is my blood.' The *THIS* is nothing but the body and the blood; it represents nothing, it means nothing, till identified at the close of the sentence, with the substances named."—(Eucharist. p. 197.) According to these glosses, more than ambiguity must be charged upon the words and manner of Jesus Christ, as the natural and inevitable interpretation by the disciples would be, that the body of their Master, if given at all, was given in the bread, the bread having become the body; for the narrative informs us, Jesus took bread, blessed it, brake it, gave it to his disciples, and in the very act of distributing it said, Take, eat; *this*—what other antecedent is there than the bread?—*this is my body*. If anything was his body it was that which he gave them; and what else did he give them than the bread which he had blessed and broken? But the construction thus put upon the words of our Lord is all but fatal to the doctrine

* *Jewel's Works*. Parker Soc. Ed. p. 628.

of transubstantiation, as it implies either that the body of Christ given in the Eucharist was a vague generality or indefinable abstraction, of which no intelligent idea could be had; or that the word *this*, having for its antecedent "the substance named at the close of the sentence," and, therefore, "identified with" it, refers not to bread but to body; in either of which cases there can be no conversion of the material elements into the human and Divine natures of Jesus Christ. In the one case we have an abstract, unintelligible, and anonymous something becoming the body and blood of the Saviour; in the other we have the Great Teacher uttering the singular truism, "this body is my body;" and in both cases there is a virtual rejection of the true idea of transubstantiation.

But the ordinary faith of Roman Catholics, as defined in their recognised standards of doctrine, has nothing to do with these refinements, but affirms plainly: "Because Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be verily His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion takes place of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, conveniently and properly called Transubstantiation." —Council of Trent. Sess. xiii. Chap. iv. Answering to this declarative statement is a Canon pronouncing anathema on any one who "shall deny that wonderful and singular conversion of the whole substance of the bread into the body, and of the whole substance of the wine into the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, the species only of the bread and wine

remaining.”—Sess. xiii. Canon ii. To state this doctrine is to refute it; to present it in simple analysis is to show the impossibility of a rational conviction of its truth. For this reason the privilege of a mystery is claimed for it, and a privilege accorded to no other mystery, that of immunity from all strictly logical investigation. We are “admonished,” by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, “not to inquire too curiously into the manner in which this change may be made, for it defies our powers of conception; nor have we any example of it in natural changes, nor in the work itself of creation.” And in the spirit of this admonition Dr. Wiseman observes, “The fact is, this is a *mystery*, part of the mystery of the Incarnation*—it is itself an object of faith, and, as such, withdrawn from the sphere of philosophical inquiry.”

There are some propositions so evidently self-contradictory that the simple definition of their terms is all that is necessary for their refutation. There are others so violently opposed to the almost instinctive determinations of an enlightened judgment, so incapable of reconciliation with truth in general, and especially with some particular truths to which they stand in certain relationship, and demanding for their reception so complete an ascendancy of one part

* It is indeed a much greater mystery than the Incarnation, as it is not the assumption by a Divine person of the highest form of created existence—a form in which both human and Divine attributes could be intelligibly manifested, but the transfer and union of perfect Humanity and perfect Divinity to almost infinitesimal particles of inorganic matter. The former is conceivable, but the latter sets conception at defiance. Besides, transubstantiation can be a “part of the mystery of the incarnation” only as it is a kind of repetition of it; but as a repetition, it is the multiplication of the mystery by the number of atoms which enter into the material substances used in the Eucharist in all places, and throughout all time. Well may the Tridentine divines admonish *the people not to inquire too curiously into this subject.*

of our nature over another, designed to act with it not in subjection but in fellowship, that it is difficult, not to say impossible, to acknowledge them, and yet offer to God a *reasonable*, an intelligently holy, *service*. Of this kind is the dogma of transubstantiation. By affirming that the properties of a thing may remain while the substance of it is wholly changed; that is to say, that the only attributes which can at any time assure us of its existence are there, and yet the thing itself which they verify to our intelligence is not there, but another thing requiring different properties in its place, it affirms in effect that a thing may be and not be at the same time, and thus demands of our faith the recognition of a doctrine which our reason pronounces a self-contradiction and a falsehood.

But even could it be shown that no such contradiction is involved, there would still remain this consequence, that sense and reason, not personal but general, each in its own department, and possessing in that department by Divine investiture a power which admits of no superior authority, must be surrendered, as though incompetent or deceptive, to the absolute dominion of an indiscriminating faith. The reports of one and the deductions of the other, in the very sphere in which they rightfully claim a kind of supremacy, must be rejected as untrue, because they oppose the human exposition of certain Scriptures susceptible of another interpretation; and thus the voice of God distinguishable in the harmonious utterances of our several faculties, be silenced and lost in that which at the most can only be presumed to be his voice as spoken in his written word. This, it is obvious, is to lay the foundation alike of universal scepticism and of universal credulity, as the admission once made that our senses and reason are in their own provinces untrustworthy, and in some cases

altogether false in their testimony, and the way is open for the denial of any truth however important, or the belief of any proposition however impossible. Let man cease to have confidence in his own nature, and he soon ceases to have confidence in the truth itself, and instead of rearing on a basis of adamant a superstructure of divine knowledge and faith—instead of building into ever-enlarging proportions and ever-heightening symmetry and grace the gold, silver, and precious stones, which the great architect has so liberally supplied in the mines of Scripture and the quarries of a true philosophy—he raises on the shifting sands of human authority the wood, hay, and stubble, of opinions formed to be discarded, or of systems and creeds white it may be with the hoar of centuries, but destined to perish in the fire that is to try every man's work of what sort it is. It is also to interfere with the constitutional exercise of our faculties ; to put asunder what God has joined together ; to encourage usurpation where he has established mutual dependence and joint authority, and pernicious schism where he has designed perfect agreement and synthetic unity. As the result of this, it is to render partial the developement of our powers, to limit the varied action and prevent the organic growth of man's nature, and thus, by the disproportion of its several elements, to give to personal religion that unloveliness of feature, as well as immaturity of form, which springs out of deficiency in one thing and excess in another.

Reason and Faith are constituent elements of the same divinely inspired nature, and cannot therefore be regarded as opposing powers, separated and brought into conflict by adverse interests. They are rather, with peculiar provinces and distinct though well-adjusted prerogatives, associated *sovereigns* over the same spiritual empire, each being com-

plementary to the other, and both uniting in the same act with such a balance and reciprocal interaction of their forces, that one almost seems the other. There is perhaps no exercise, certainly no important exercise, of the mind, which can be put down to the exclusive dominion of either; and yet their influences so run and blend into each other that it is difficult, except in the most refined analysis, to discriminate and exhibit them in their complete individual identity. Thus mutually dependant, it is from their co-operative powers and harmonious action that there springs what the apostle describes as "the spirit of a *sound mind*." Let their due proportions be changed, and their constitutional agreement be disturbed, and soundness will give place to disorder, as the fine balance of man's nature, by which his knowledge and belief are compounded into such a beautiful unity, will inevitably be destroyed. Let Faith step out of her legitimate sphere and aspire to an undivided supremacy, and a credulous superstition will be the result; let Reason mount to a despotic throne and usurp a sovereign sway, and a proud though ever-unsatisfying scepticism will ensue. Let both unite their complementary energies in the same act, and man possesses a twofold illumination, like the confluent lights of double stars or of constellated suns; and guided by their excellent glory, even in the presence of impenetrable and awful mysteries, offers to God the service of a well-instructed piety, and worships Him *in spirit and in truth*.*

* "The excellence of man—so complexly constituted is his nature—must consist in the harmonious action and proper balance of all the constituents of that nature; the equilibrium he sighs for must be the result of the combined action of forces operating in different directions; of his reason, his faith, his appetites, his affections, his emotions; when these operate in due proportion, then, and then only, can he be at rest. It may, indeed, transcend any calculus of man to estimate exactly the

Considered from another point, and in the light of that philosophy which ever seeks the resolution of the many and various into one substantial unity, Reason and Faith, with Sense also,* as antecedent and lower in the same series, are not like the antagonistic forces of material nature, from the opposition of which harmony and equilibrium result; they are rather successively higher modifications and exercises of the same intuitive faculty, in gradually ascending spheres of its operations. They are all endowed with corresponding capabilities, and have for their office the perception and discovery of truth; but one deals with outward phenomena, the other with first principles and their logical determinations, and the third with realities

several elements in this complicated polygion of forces; but we are at least sure that, if any one principle be so developed as to supersede another, no safe equipoise will be attained. We all know familiarly enough that this is the case when the affections or the appetites are more powerful than the reason and the conscience, instead of being in subjection to them: but it is not less the case, though the result is not so palpable, when reason and faith either exclude one another, or trench on each other's domain; when one is pampered and the other starved. Hence the perils attendant upon their attempted separation, and the ruin which results from their actual alienation and hostility. There is no depth of dreary superstition into which men may not sink in the one case, and no extravagance of ignorant presumption to which they may not soar in the other. It is only by the mutual and alternate action of these different forces that man can safely navigate his little bark through the narrow straits and by the dangerous rocks which impede his course; and if Faith spread out the sail to the breeze, or if Reason desert the helm, we are in equal peril."—*Reason and Faith*, H. Rogers, p.p. 18, 19.

* By Sense, thus loosely used, is meant not sensation, but *perception* obtained through its medium. Between sensation and perception, considered in themselves, there is this difference; one is subjective, and the other objective. One is feeling, in which *self* only is regarded; the other is idea, in which *not-self* is included. One is an organic affection simply considered; the other is the affection with the direct consciousness of the object which excites it. See Sir W. Hamilton's *Reid*, p. 881.

which, though they can neither be seen, nor perhaps formally reasoned out, are yet distinctly apprehended in a light of their own, while many of them have their verification in the deep religious wants and longings and prophetic anticipations of our common nature. However different their immediate objects, they are never at war in their legitimate conclusions. One cannot, except in cases of explicable illusion, pronounce a thing to be true, which another can as certainly declare to be false. The faithful testimony of the Senses has always its corroboration in the just verdict of the Reason, and the affirmations of the Reason are ever in perfect accordance with the intuitions of Faith.

Besides this, the idea received, while substantiated and confirmed, is also developed to greater clearness and extent, is often in fact both enlarged and transfigured, as the object perceived passes out of the domain of one power into that of another. That which is realized by the Senses brightens into a stronger illumination and rises to a higher significance as it is apprehended by the Reason, and the view obtained by the Reason stretches to a vaster comprehension, even though its distinctness fades into continually growing obscurity, as it comes within the operation of Faith. This is eminently the case in respect to the more important verities of religion. Faith is the augmented power of Reason, or rather perhaps, the addition to it of a higher capability,—the telescope by which Reason penetrates to a region not its own, and sweeps an horizon it could not itself command. Reason, gifted with a bright and piercing intelligence, carries the view onward to a certain limit, but at this point its eye becomes dim, and its natural force is abated; Faith then comes to its aid, and prolongs the view in the same direction, though it may be with a clearness

diminishing as a profounder depth is gained into the dread mysteries of eternity and infinity. Hence, as Coleridge beautifully remarks, "The scheme of Christianity, though not discoverable by human Reason, is yet in accordance with it; link follows link in necessary consequence; Religion passes out of the ken of Reason only when the eye of Reason has reached its own horizon; and Faith is then but its continuation: even as the day softens into the sweet twilight, and twilight, hushed and breathless, steals into the darkness."*

Now transubstantiation demands what a true philosophy imperatively forbids. It exacts a belief in utter disregard of the conditions essential to a *sound mind*, as such belief is possible only by the undue ascendancy of one power over another. That perfect adjustment of Reason to Faith and of Faith to Reason on which the correct balance and harmonious exercise of man's faculties are felt to depend, that mutual dependance and interaction of their several forces which as a general principle enters so obviously into the intellectual and moral training through which the race is always passing, is by this doctrine wholly disregarded, and even practically denied. Reason is excluded from the fellowship of Faith, and the latter, having the authority of both, is invested with an undivided and absolute supremacy.

Bread and wine are laid on the table of the Lord; they are blessed by human lips, and raised for worship by human hands. Councils and priests declare they are no longer bread and wine, but by a miraculous transmutation have become the very flesh and blood of the Son of God. This is a phenomenon which properly appeals to the Senses, and may, if true, be verified by the Reason. But

* Biog. Lit., Vol. II. 3 08—9.

Reason is not allowed to examine, much less to decide. A special injunction is laid upon it to repress its curiosity, and virtually to suspend its functions. The species of bread and wine are there, it is admitted : Sense confirms this beyond the possibility of a doubt ; and Reason, if permitted, would say—If the species are there, then the substance must be there also. The appeal, however, is not to Reason, even in its own sphere. Faith alone is addressed, and this is required to pronounce, however opposed by all the circumstances on which a rational judgment could be based, that the qualities of bread and wine are there and not the substance, that the actual presence of Jesus Christ, human as well as divine, is there, and not its form. The fact is not to be denied because it involves apparent contradictions, as these are the contradictions of a power not invested with judicial prerogative. It is not a theme to be discussed, but a miracle to be believed ; it is more indeed than a miracle, in the usual sense—it is an unsearchable and adorable mystery. It is, therefore, simply to be received on the authority which propounds it, and beyond this passive reception no personal exercise is either demanded or suffered. Reason is thus silenced and degraded, robbed of its freedom and legitimate influence, and made not the partner but the slave, not the helpmate but the vassal of Faith ; the finely-adjusted relationship of the human powers is disturbed and injured by the arbitrary pre-eminence that is given to one over the rest ; and communion with the Saviour of the world at his own table, the most purely reflective as well as deeply solemn of all religious acts, is lowered from the high fellowship of a well instructed piety to the degenerate service of a superstitious credulity.

Nay, more. There is not only supremacy where joint authority was designed, but division where unity, and oppo-

sition where agreement and harmony, were intended. Reason, directly appealed to, declares at once and inevitably, that there is no conversion of bread into flesh, and of wine into blood. It does not, as in the case of clearly revealed miracles and mysteries, suspend its inquiry, as having come into the presence of that which rises out of its sphere; nor yield its assent, as unable to offer any objection of equal weight with the evidence adduced: but, assured that the fact alleged is one that is capable of rational determination, and that all the proof available is decidedly adverse to its truth, it affirms conclusively, and, unless oppressed and crippled in its operations, will affirm irresistibly, that this pretended fact has no real existence. That the Eternal Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, that disease fled at his touch, and death was vanquished by his presence, Reason admits without hesitation, as this admission involves no denial of its testimony and no surrender of its rights; but that bread is changed into a threefold personality, and, while appearing to be bread, is actually the body, soul, and divinity of the Son of God, Reason cannot possibly receive, as such conversion is opposed by all the circumstances on which a purely rational judgment could be based. *Rationally* to believe this, therefore, that is, to believe it because, notwithstanding its perplexing difficulty, no objection can be pleaded against it of equal value with the evidence in its favour,—because, though above the height and below the depth of human intelligence, it comes into collision with no facts of which we have the most certain knowledge,—because, though receding far away from our view into the region of unsearchable mystery, it yet lies parallel to the very faculties which it baffles and overpowers,—in short, to believe it and not deny ourselves, is plainly and absolutely *impossible*. Faith in the dogma is infidelity to our

nature. Reason in its own province rejects it as false; Faith, divorced from Reason, and reposing on human authority, receives it as true; the result is, even though unconsciously, not only the exaltation of Faith over Reason, but a disagreement between them which admits of no reconciliation.

A still further consequence of this doctrine is that Faith itself is injured by it. It is raised to importance but not to dignity, invested with supremacy but degraded in quality. From a discriminating faculty it descends to a pliant credulity; from a power of spiritual discernment it degenerates to a mere susceptibility of dogmatic impression. Instead of the "continuation," it becomes the antithesis of Reason, having a different character and an independent office. Instead of prolonging its view in the same direction, and giving it a deeper insight into the things which the natural man receiveth not, it fetters its liberty and limits its range,—fastens as a clog to its wing, and spreads as a film before its eye. It is blind and servile, the sport of accident, or the slave of the reigning creed. It is not a power, but a passion; not a form of intelligence, but a passivity of will; not the realization of things desired and the intuition of things unseen, but a mere capability of attachment which, like parasitic plants, will clasp and grow upon almost any dogma which the authority it receives and venerates requires it to embrace. Such a Faith is equally adverse to the genius of the Gospel, and dishonourable to the nature of man.

It is yet another consequence of this doctrine, that it ruins the evidence for Scripture miracles. If the reports of the Senses are not to be trusted in matters which properly fall within their province, with what certainty can it be alleged, that the first teachers of Christianity were not deceived in

respect to the signs and wonders of which they speak in the Gospel histories? Is it not the sensible character of the miracles wrought, together with the trust-worthiness and competency to form a sound judgment of the persons who witnessed and have related them, that constitutes a material part of the proof of their truth? But how can this evidence stand in presence of the dogma of transubstantiation? Let it be said that miracles, involving an actual change of substances, and a change so great that bread becomes flesh and wine becomes blood, may take place, and yet that the eye which sees and the palate which tastes shall not detect the change, but still be sensible of the common properties of bread and wine, and this not in one instance, where disease might account for deception, but in millions, and what reliance can be placed on the testimony of men who aver that they beheld sickness yield to the touch, and death vanquished by a word, water converted into wine, and a few loaves increased to a sufficiency for the wants of five thousand people? For if the Senses may be deceived in not perceiving a miracle when wrought, especially one so striking as to amount to a stupendous act of creation, they may surely be deceived in imagining a miracle when none has been performed.

From these and the like considerations we arrive inevitably at the conclusion, that the words, "This is my body," cannot be understood in their literal interpretation. The only construction that is free from the pressure of insuperable difficulty is that which gives them a purely figurative import. This alone agrees with the *commemorative* character of the ordinance itself, falls in with that spiritual conception of Christianity which accords a special blessing to the man who though he has not seen the Saviour has *yet believed* in him, and reconciles in the same view, and to

the most perfect harmony, the suggestions of a true philosophy and the demands of a sound Scriptural exegesis.

By a form of speech not uncommon in the sacred volume, and giving greater force and compression to the thoughts intended, that is said *to be* a thing which is designed solely as its typical representative. In the rapid succession of ideas the sign runs into the things signified, until in the mind of the writer, it becomes identified with it; and then, as there is little danger of confounding them, the terms appropriate to one are freely applied to the other, and the unity of the conception is expressed in the compact brevity and unity of a single phrase. It is thus in the following instances:—"The ram which thou sawest is the King of the Medes and Persians;" "the ten horns are ten kingdoms;" "the seven kine are seven years;" "the seven candlesticks are the seven churches;" "the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches;" "that rock was Christ;" "this *cup* is the New Testament in my blood." All these examples plead the same licence of speech, and demand one common law of interpretation. The last, however, is remarkable as being the language of our Lord himself at the institution of his Supper, and, from its reference to this ordinance, as suggesting the application of the very figure it specially illustrates to the words immediately under review. "This cup is the New Testament in my blood," is exactly the same form of expression as "this bread is my body," "this wine is my blood." No difference of construction can be asserted except on purely arbitrary grounds, and for exclusively theological purposes. Unless it affirmed that the word of God is flexible to every creed, or that a self-constituted authority can fix its meaning without a just regard to the ordinary laws of language, the same rule must be applied to all the passages, and the rendering of one, whether as

literal or figurative, must determine the rendering of the other. But the first is confessedly figurative, as no one maintains that the cup is literally the New Testament, but only the memorial of it: for similar reasons the other must be regarded as figurative too, as no one can consistently allege that bread is the veritable body, and wine the veritable blood, of Jesus Christ, but only their representative symbols. All the instances adduced belong to the same class and exemplify the like usage, and all become simply and beautifully intelligible when expounded by the same canon. The ten horns are the signs of the ten kingdoms: the seven stars represent the angels of the seven churches: the smitten rock was the type of the crucified Jesus: the cup was significant of the Covenant ratified and completed by his death: the broken bread is the symbol of his broken body, and the outpoured wine the symbol of his shed blood; and both are for a continual memorial of that one offering by which the Son of God hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

This view of the words of our Lord is supported by the inspired exposition of the Apostle Paul. Instructed on the subject by a special revelation from heaven, he tells us that the observance of the rite, according to the terms of its institution, was designed to *shew*, to attest and celebrate, to make manifest and bring home by vivid representation, the Lord's death till he come. Its intention was not simply to declare the fact, and preserve the memory of his death, but symbolically to interpret and impress upon the mind its deep and vital import. It is thus, like the Paschal Supper it was meant to displace and succeed, a feast upon a sacrifice, by which the sacrifice itself is exhibited to the eye of faith, and the soul is brought into that profound fellowship with the Redeemer's sufferings expressed with so

much energy in the words of the Apostle: *I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.**

* The following observations may be added to our arguments. They have a twofold interest and value; first, as true and weighty in themselves, and, secondly, as coming from one who with such Christian heroism suffered martyrdom for the belief, that "in the Eucharist is not the true and natural body of Christ and his true and natural blood under the species of bread and wine; and that there is there material bread and material wine only, without the truth and presence of the body and blood of Christ." "St. Paul attests in the clearest language, that the substance of the bread remains in the celebration of the Supper of the Lord. The bread, says he, which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? He does not say, the accident, or the form of bread which we break, is the communion of the body of Christ: neither does he say this, The body of Christ lies under the form of the bread which we break; but most simply and plainly he says, The *bread* which we break is the communion of the body of Christ. Whence it appears that after the words of consecration, and in the very act of distribution, the bread remains the same. The bread broken, distributed, received, eaten, consecrated—this is the communion of the body of Christ. . . . Paul would not have been so inconsiderate as to call that bread which had become the body of Christ; neither would any one of sane mind speak of breaking the accidents of bread. Again, 'There is one bread; and we being many are one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread.' Here the Holy Spirit, the true interpreter of the mind of Christ, designates through the apostle Paul the Eucharist of the Saviour's body, *bread* of which we partake. We conclude, therefore, with the Holy Spirit, that the substance of the bread is neither taken away nor changed, as to its substance, but remains perpetually in the Supper; and that they who teach otherwise not only contradict the text of Scripture, but impute falsehood to the Holy Spirit himself. To these testimonies may be added the following from the same Apostle—1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28. From these passages we learn that true bread and true wine continue in the most sacred Supper of the Lord," &c.—*Hooper's Works. De vera doctrina et usu cœnæ Domini* 408. *Parker Society.* Our Lord, it may also be observed, calls the wine which he gave to his disciples at the institution of the Supper "this fruit of the vine," which he will not drink again,

It is incidental proof of the representative character of the Lord's Supper, that Baptism, to which it corresponds as a Sacrament, is eminently and confessedly symbolical. "I indeed," said the Forerunner of Jesus, as he fulfilled his course, "baptize you with water unto repentance; but He that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." The fulfilment of this promise, however, did not involve the discontinuance of Baptism by water. Under the sanction of Divine authority the rite was still perpetuated, and was specially adopted as the sign of that very spiritual Baptism by Jesus Christ which John had prophetically announced. In this respect it resembled the rite of circumcision, of which, indeed, under the Christian economy it was designed to take the place. Circumcision was to the Jews the sign of moral purification. Hence, when their deep depravity is spoken of, they are said to be "uncircumcised in heart." When they are commanded to "put away their abominations from His sight," it is thus Jehovah addresses them: "Circumcise yourselves to the Lord, and take away the foreskins of your heart; lest my fury come forth like fire," &c. When encouragement to repentance is given, the promise is expressed in these words: "And the Lord thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live." When "an Israelite indeed" is portrayed, his character is set forth in the following terms: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly: neither is that circumcision,

until he drink it new with them in his Father's kingdom. And this he does after he has said of it: "This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."—Matt. xxvi. 28, 29. But if after what is deemed consecration it is the fruit of the vine, it cannot literally be the blood of Christ, but only *representatively and figuratively so.*"

which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew which is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter: whose praise is not of men, but of God.* How far the figurative was grounded on the literal sense, and the one was naturally suggestive of the other, it is not necessary to inquire; but in its purely spiritual reference, Circumcision obviously denoted "the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh."

Now water is the Scriptural emblem of spiritual influence, and the cleansing of the body by one is typical of the sanctification of the soul by the other. Under this emblem the effusion of the Holy Spirit is foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will pour my Spirit upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." "Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. . . . And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and to keep my judgments." In both these passages the one part explains the other, the water of the first clause being manifestly identical with the Spirit of the second. The same figure, though not expressed, yet implied in the verb that is used, is given in the memorable prophecy of Joel: "And it shall come to pass, that I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, . . . and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I *pour out* my Spirit." Resembling these are the words of Jesus Christ as reported by the beloved disciple, in which, under the same figurative representation, he promises the Holy Spirit as the peculiar recompense of faith. "In the last day, the great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried,

* Jer. ix. 24. Jer. x. 2. Lev. xli. 9. Rom. ii. 29, 30.

saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this," adds the Evangelist in a parenthesis, "spake he of the Spirit which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."* With the form of the promise agrees the account of its fulfilment. "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath *shed forth*, (*ἐκέχεε, poured out*) this, which ye now see and hear." "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which he *shed*, (*ἐκέχεε, poured out*) on us abundantly, through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Water is thus, on the ground of analogies almost too obvious to require pointing out, the recognised type of Divine influence. One cleanses to the purifying of the flesh, the other to the sanctification of the spirit; the former refreshes a bodily sense, the latter satisfies a spiritual desire.

Baptism by water, then, is, with manifest propriety, the sign of regeneration by the Spirit. It is at once the rite by which a personal interest in the economy of redemption is formally acknowledged, even where its benefits cannot be reflectively enjoyed, and the outward symbol of that inward operation by which the privileges of Christian fellowship pass from a mere covenant right to a deep and blissful experience. It thus answers a double purpose, its appropriateness to the one being the ground of its selection for the other. It serves as an ordinance to initiate into the

* Isaiah xlv. 8. Ezek. xxxv. 25, 26, 27. Joel. ii. 28, 29.
John vii. 37, 38.

visible church, giving its subject a claim to the external advantages of properly accredited membership; and also as a sign to set forth that higher ablution which introduces into the spiritual kingdom of God, and entitles to all the blessedness of a true adoption. Hence, as connected in doctrine, though neither invariable in order nor inseparable in time, the two operations of water and the Spirit are in scripture frequently put together: both are included, though on separate grounds and in widely different senses, as terms of individual salvation; and each, respectively, is called a baptism and a birth. They are thus associated and spoken of, not as one is conducive to the other, nor as both are equally indispensable to the same result, but as one is the public recognition of ostensible connexion with the kingdom of God, and the other is the proof and means to the individual of actual admission into it—as one is the outward and visible sign, and the other is the inward and spiritual grace. No other meaning, consistent with enlightened reason and agreeable to the general tenour of sacred Scripture, can be given to the words of our Lord: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;” or to those of the apostle Paul, “according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.”*

It is true, regarding water in the first passage as the type of Divine influence, and translating the connective particle, *καί, even, namely, to wit*, we obtain an eminently Scriptural sense, as we then read, what no one will deny, that “except a man be born of water, even of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” This version, however, though not altogether indefensible, is somewhat singular, and, if the second passage must be interpreted by

* John iii. 5. Titus iii. 5.

the first, is more than doubtful, as, to render the parallelism complete, the words of Paul should be, not, "by the washing of regeneration," as that anticipates the exposition of the following clause, but "by the washing of water, even the renewing of the Holy Ghost." But the principal objection to this construction is that it narrows to less than its intended limits the meaning of Jesus Christ, and fails to meet the whole case of Nicodemus as it was obviously present to his view. The Jewish Rabbi was one of a small number of the better class, some of whom were in the Sanhedrim, whose prejudices had not been able to resist the powerful attraction of the Saviour's character. Having witnessed his miraculous deeds, he yielded his judgment to their legitimate influence, and satisfied himself with the conclusion that he who could perform such marvellous works must be a teacher from God. Convinced of his Divine mission, he was anxious for a personal interview with him. Persuaded of his competency to teach he desired immediately to learn of him. But to address him him openly would be to proclaim himself his disciple, and draw down upon him the contemptuous inquiry of the sect to which he belonged, "Art thou also deceived?" Consulting his fears, therefore, rather than his convictions, and hoping for the advantages without the reproaches of the application, he came to Jesus by night, and secretly professed his faith in his mission from heaven. Perfectly did the Redeemer understand his visitor. He knew his pride and yet his compunction, the strength of his spiritual anxieties and yet the depth of his carnal policies. He therefore struck home to his heart at once. Addressing at the same time the twofold necessity of his case, the want of moral courage which kept him from an outward confession of Christ, and the absence of spiritual renovation which

disqualified him from an inward fellowship with him, he said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." To be a member of this kingdom in the fullest sense, ostensibly and really, by the recognition of the Church and the approval of God, two operations are required, baptism by water, and sanctification by the Spirit.—The Sacraments are thus not only monumental verifications of Christian history, but significant expositions of Christian doctrine.

III.

Seals of the Covenant of Grace. Considered in this light, Baptism and the Lord's Supper have a still higher character, and their due observance becomes to the individual, more directly and eminently, the means of spiritual good. They confirm and assure to our hearts the truth and grace which as signs they present to our view; while, on our part, they imply, to the extent of actual capability, both the faith which discerns and appropriates the blessings they symbolise, and the formal presentation of our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, as our reasonable service. They are, consequently, covenant engagements continually repeated,—federal rites, at every worthy celebration of which there is a setting forth and renewing of the mutual stipulations between God and man, pledging the faithfulness of the one to fulfil the promise of eternal life made in Jesus Christ, and the willingness of the other to receive the grace offered according to the appointed method of its dispensation, and, in grateful acknowledgment of it, to live not unto himself, but unto Him who died for him, and rose again.

The dealings of God with our race are comprehended

generically in two great covenants, and these are called respectively the covenant of works, and the covenant of grace. The first covenant, to which human nature was at the beginning constituted and adapted, had its foundation in moral law, and its terms were, "Do this, and thou shalt live." The second covenant, designed to meet man's condition as a sinner, was grounded in atoning sacrifice, and its conditions were, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The first covenant was made in Paradise, and was afterwards, though not as a means of life, repeated, with a formal expansion of its engagements and obligations, in the Dispensation given by Moses to the children of Israel. Once broken its renewal became impossible, as life was the forfeit of transgression. Disobedience, therefore, was the total ruin of man, leaving him without strength to retrieve his loss, and without hope that his punishment would be averted. The event however had been foreseen and provided for. The ultimate purpose of creation was not to be frustrated, nor its progressive accomplishment suspended, even by sin. The original design was still to be wrought out, and wrought out by the very redemption of him whose fall had seemed to thwart it. Once the fairest impress of the Divine excellency, he was still the special object of the Divine regard, and the Creator set His heart upon him to magnify him. The work already done was not, though injured, to be abandoned: its injury was rather to be the occasion and the starting point of a further and a higher achievement. The dilapidated structure was not to be left to decay, but to be restored and beautified to a loftier conception. Creation was not, like a magnificent city wasted by the enemy, to remain a splendid ruin, but to be followed by another creation, the glory of which, like that of the second temple, should greatly

exceed the glory of the first. And the outbirth of infinite perfection, the manifestation of Divine self-sufficiency, as the end contemplated from the beginning, was not suddenly to cease as if from failure, but, as gathering triumph from apparent defeat, was to attain a grander result and a more luminous display, by that very transgression of man which had threatened to arrest its progress and obscure its lustre.

Hence another covenant was established to supersede the former one, and, while taking its place, to represent its character and vindicate its authority. This is called the *second* and the *new* covenant, the one term describing the order of its succession, and the other the mode of its dispensation under the Gospel. In its simple essence the covenant is not new, but ancient as human depravity. The principle of it was contained in the first great promise of redemption by the Seed of the woman, given immediately after the fall. It was also embodied in some kind of revelation to those early patriarchs who offered acceptable sacrifice, walked with God, and became heirs of the righteousness which is by faith. But it was with Abraham that the covenant was first established with distinct formality, and with special application. In connexion with him, as the chosen representative of a whole people, and after them, of all the families of the earth, the gracious purpose before made known to the fathers, and handed down from one to another in feeble utterance and imperfect suggestion, assumed the shape of a definite announcement, and received the character of a federal transaction.

“ When Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God ; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face : and God

talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee. And I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God.”* This covenant, with less minuteness of detail and less completeness of form, had been preceded by two earlier editions of it, each of which anticipated the other, and both prepared the way for this last and larger version. The first was given when “the God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall shew thee;” and, notwithstanding its brevity, is remarkable as containing the purely evangelic promise, “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.”† The second followed upon Abraham’s victory over the four chiefs, and his noble conduct to the king of Sodom: it was given on the occasion of his complaint that he was childless, and, though without the promise so specifically expressed in the first, is distinguished as having connected with it the statement so important to the argument of the apostle Paul, “Abraham believed in the Lord, and He counted it to him for righteousness.”‡ The third repeats with greater formality and amplification the other two, unfolds with instructive particularity the several contents of

* *Gen. xvii. 1—8.*† *Gen. xii. 3. Acts vii. 2, 3.*‡ *Gen. xv. 6.*

the covenant, defines and yet enlarges its reference by a much more frequent and varied mention of the posterity of the patriarch, and attaches to the whole transaction the solemnity of a special ordinance to give it the authority of an immutable obligation. That these are not independent of each other, but separate versions of the one single covenant, is evident from the slightest comparison of their terms. The proof of their identity, however, must be reserved to a future occasion.

Once established this covenant "remained," as the foundation and principal element of "those things that were not to be shaken," and the proof of its permanence appeared as well in the frequency of its repetition as in the excellence of its nature. From the father of the faithful it passed by special rehearsal to Isaac and Jacob, and in the dying words of the latter budded and burst forth, like the tree of life with its twelve manner of fruits, in a vast profusion of temporal blessings on the heads of his sons, with such a distribution of them as answered to the personal qualities of each, or to the position which his tribe was destined to occupy in the future commonwealth of Israel. Under the economy of Moses it was kept in continual remembrance by the administration of its appointed rite, while the promise of redemption it contained was shadowed forth by every appropriate form of typical representation. At the most flourishing period of Jewish history it was renewed with David as the "one chosen out of the people," of whom Jehovah said, "I have found David, a man after mine own heart, who shall fulfil all my will." "The God of Israel spake to him, He that ruleth over men made with him an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure;" and with such importance and interest was this renewal of the covenant invested, that its blessings could

henceforth be expressed in no choicer phrase, and with no higher commendation, than as "the sure mercies of David." At length the fulness of the time being come, the promise made unto the fathers, and at sundry times and in divers manners repeated to their children, was fulfilled. The covenant handed down from age to age, and to the eye of faith ever enlarging and brightening under prophetic illumination, was completed in the advent of the Son of God. All its engagements and assurances of spiritual good were contained and expressed in Him, and all received the seal of a most solemn ratification when, as its Divinely appointed and Divinely qualified Mediator, He became obedient unto death, and, with physical nature as the attesting witness, exclaimed, *It is finished.*

That this covenant is substantially the same throughout, notwithstanding its several varieties of form, is almost too obvious to require the statement. There is nothing in any instance of its repetition to confine its reference to a single people, by giving it a purely national character. On the contrary, it is commonly spoken of, either directly or by implication, as the "holy covenant" made with "our fathers," and perfected for ever by Jesus Christ. The old runs into the new; the ancient and the modern are essentially one. The version of it given to Abraham is no exception, as a just consideration of its terms, and the most significant allusions to it in the New Testament, fully demonstrate. It is thus the apostle speaks of it: "For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they who are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect." Again: "And this I say, that the covenant that was confirmed *before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred*

and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect. For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise.* There is in these passages almost as plain an identification of the Abrahamic with the Christian covenant as can be given in words. As the meaning of the former is determined by the interpretation of the latter, to this the view may be chiefly restricted.

That the covenant referred to is the covenant of Abraham, is placed beyond dispute by the care with which the apostle assigns its date, and the precision with which he discriminates it from the covenant of Sinai—"the law ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator," This covenant he calls the covenant of *promise*, a description which immediately suggests its evangelical character, as the distinguishing element in the covenant was a promise to bless all nations in Abraham's seed. Or if we regard the *inheritance* mentioned as the object of the promise, the conclusion is virtually the same, as this inheritance must be either, generally, that of all the blessings included in the covenant, or, specifically, that of the land of Canaan. But this land was typical as well as real, and the possession of it was the pledge of "a better country, that is, an heavenly." "The promise of eternal inheritance" was contained, as its higher meaning, in the promise to the patriarch of "a place which he should after receive for an inheritance," and the expectation of the former was heightened into certainty by the actual acquirement of the latter. "By faith he sojourned in *the land of promise*, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the *same promise*: for,"—on the ground of that very promise, as the only ground suggested,—"he

* Rom. iv. 13, 14. Gal. iii. 17, 18.

looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." "The same promise" gave him a double inheritance, a country on earth, and a better country in heaven; and his desire for one was so much greater than his love to the other, that he only sojourned as a stranger in the first, that he might look, anticipate and prepare with eager hope, for the second. However, then, the terms *promise* and *inheritance* may be applied, their full import is given only as they are made to include, with certain temporal advantages, "spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ,"—a conclusion strengthened into almost demonstration by the fact that in the last verse of the chapter, which stands in logical connection with the verses under review, the apostle says, generally, to believers: "If ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and *heirs according to the promise*." For if believers are Abraham's seed, and on the ground of this relationship are *heirs*, as the land of Canaan is no longer inheritable, that of which they are heirs must be spiritual; and if they are heirs *according to the promise*—the promise which the law could not disannul—then the object of this promise must, though earthly in the lower view of it, be heavenly in the higher. The Apostle further declares of the covenant, that it was confirmed by God *in Christ*, or, *in respect to Christ*,—an expression which no rendering, consistent with the terms, can so far restrict or secularize as to make the covenant otherwise than substantially Christian. That which had its foundation *in Christ*, which looked to Him as its ultimate end, and found in him its surest pledge, must, whatever its subordinate meaning, have been essentially evangelical in its central idea. And, in truth, as if to place this beyond controversy, the Apostle, in the very chapter from which the verses under consideration are taken,

speaks of the ordination of the covenant as the preaching of the Gospel unto Abraham; and the blessing he received by faith in it, as identical with that which has "come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ." "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the Gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed. So then, they who are of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham."*

The New Covenant, then, is new only in the particular form of its dispensation. It may be traced backward through various editions of it up to the first Divine announcement on the plains of Chaldea, and then, in its fundamental principle, still further backward, until, in the cool of the evening, and as the beauty of Paradise is just beginning to sicken under the recent curse, we hear the voice of God relieving the burden of guilt and turning despair into hope, by the promise of a redeeming seed. The Covenant is thus the general Covenant of redemption, that which constitutes the very groundwork of God's entire procedure with our race, and which runs, like the river of his pleasures, carrying refreshment and fertility in its course, through all the successive dispensations of his saving mercy. It is, therefore, both in substance and in form, of ancient date. Obscurely intimated at the fall, it was solemnly established with Abraham. Kept in remembrance under Moses, it was specially renewed with David. Unfolded in the variety of its spiritual contents by the prophets, it was perfected for ever by the Son of God, who in his life became "the messenger of the covenant," and in his death its Mediator.

This is the *Everlasting* Covenant, and ordinances have been Divinely instituted as if to give it a visible perpetuity, at every celebration of which there is a virtual attestation

* Gal. iii. 8, 9.

on the part of God of its inviolable stability, and a professed recognition on the part of man of the engagement to believe and obey to which it implicitly binds him. These are the *seals* of the covenant.

Covenants have generally some form of ratification. Morally considered they are binding in themselves, and no ceremony can add to their validity. But from the earliest times their inherent force has been expressed by some outward act, and personal fidelity to their stipulations has been pledged by the consenting parties "setting to their seal." To this custom the Divine Being has condescended in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. These, in the fact of their institution, are seals on the part of God confirming his mercy to us in Jesus Christ; and, in the fact of their observance, are seals on the part of man binding him to the fulfilment of all the obligations which the offer of that mercy involves and requires. They are, consequently, declarations, visibly and unceasingly made, that the foundation of God standeth sure; and professions, repeatedly and solemnly given, that the partakers in them are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people.*

* "The term (seal) is used in three senses in Scripture. The first is in the sense of *security*, as when a person seals a letter. "The foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, the Lord knoweth them that are his."—(2 Tim. ii. 19.) The second is in the sense of *distinction*, as when a merchant puts his seal on his goods to appropriate and distinguish them. "In whom after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise."—(Ephes. i. 13.) The third is in the sense of *confirmation*, as when a seal is affixed to a charter or bargain. "And because of all this we make a sure covenant, and write it; and our princes, Levites, and priests seal unto it."—(Neh. ix. 38.) Now, in applying the term *seal* to the ordinance of baptism, it is not either in the first or second senses here noticed that we are to understand it. It is not used in the sense of *securing the person*, or of distinguishing him from others. Baptism is not an

That Circumcision was the seal of the covenant made with Abraham, is placed without the limit of controversy by the express language of Scripture. "He received the sign of circumcision, a *seal* of the righteousness of the faith which he had being uncircumcised ;" *—the meaning of which word as thus applied is obviously this, that the rite of circumcision, while distinguishing by an indelible mark those to whom it was administered as a people specially set apart to the service of the Lord, was at every observance of it a virtual renewal, in the sense of a formal ratification, of the covenant which promised the blessing of Abraham, "the righteousness of faith, to those who after his example were strong in faith, giving glory to God." That the covenant of which circumcision was the seal was, in its broadest reference and deepest meaning, the covenant of salvation made in Christ, has been already asserted, and, except as a reason for excluding infants from baptism, is rarely denied. To justify such exclusion it is sometimes objected that the form of the covenant given in the seventeenth chapter of Genesis, to which the ordinance is attached, is essentially distinct from the forms contained in the twelfth

assurance of salvation to any, or a pledge of sonship. In this sense it is the Spirit alone that is the seal of God's people. It is in the third sense only, namely, in that of the confirmation of a deed, that we use the term in relation to baptism. It is the seal which God has been pleased to append to the character of his covenant. It is not like the signet which Pharaoh put on the hand of Joseph as a badge of distinction, or like the ring put on the hand of the penitent prodigal in token of acceptance ; it is rather like the signet by which King Ahasuerus sealed the letters which saved the Jews from destruction. Thus, while baptism viewed as a symbol has a relation to the grace of the covenant, viewed as a seal it stands related to the covenant itself. . . . Baptism is the sign, but it is not, properly or directly, the seal of regeneration ;—it symbolises the blessing, but it seals the covenant."—Dr. McCrie's Lectures on Christian Baptism. p. p. 8, 9.

* Rom. iv. 11.

and fifteenth chapters ; that the one is a covenant of temporal blessings only, with circumcision for its seal, and the other a covenant of purely spiritual blessings, unattested by any sign ; that the former was designed for the natural offspring of the patriarch, and the latter for his spiritual offspring. To this it may be replied, that the theory of a plurality of covenants is at least suspicious, because it is adopted, for the most part, as furnishing an argument against infant baptism, and not from any obvious necessity founded on the simple narrative of Scripture. It is further questionable, because it introduces difference where identity might be expected, and violates that unity of idea and simplicity of procedure, so characteristic of the Divine Being, by which various objects are related to the same purpose and comprehended under one arrangement. It also interferes with that typical relation between the old and the new by which the things that are seen become the emblem and pledge of things that are not seen ; and at the same time disturbs, if it does not dissolve, that beautiful connexion between them which regards them as different sides or successive developments of the same thing, adapted in their respective natures to separate periods of Divine manifestation and of human progress, agreeably to that established order according to which the present anticipates the future, and the temporal is at once the type and prophecy of the spiritual. Besides, had the version of the covenant to which circumcision is appended been purely temporal, and as such distinct from that which is wholly spiritual, this, it is not unreasonable to think, would have been indicated with sufficient clearness to prevent mistake ; but no intimation of the kind appears either in the original narrative of the transaction, or in any subsequent reference to it. *Only one covenant is spoken of throughout ; this is*

uniformly designated *the* covenant; and of this covenant, thus simple and alone, and, therefore, as including the higher and the lower, the national and the religious, what was peculiar to the Jews and what was designed for the race, circumcision is the appointed seal.

Again. Circumcision is pre-eminently the sign of *spiritual blessings*. Whatever else its office, it serves as the outward token of inward purity. This is everywhere asserted both in the Old and New Testaments, and with such plainness, that "circumcision" is expressly said to be "that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God." Indeed the spiritual import of the rite is generally admitted. Even Dr. Carson confesses, "Circumcision and Baptism correspond in meaning. They both relate to the removal of sin, the one by cutting, the other by washing." But if a sign of spiritual blessings, such blessings must be included in the covenant of which circumcision was the seal; and if thus included, the covenant must have been one of spiritual as well as temporal promises. This conclusion is confirmed by the additional fact that circumcision is definitely called by the Apostle a seal of that righteousness of faith which constitutes the primary blessing under the Gospel. Speaking of Abraham in his exemplary and federal character, he observes: "He received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had being yet uncircumcised; that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised, that righteousness might be imputed unto them also."* To all which is to be added the remarkable circumstance, that the covenant of circumcision, said to be of temporal blessings only, is that very covenant of which the language seems to have been most familiar to

* Rom. iv. 11.

the writers of the New Testament, and to which, with the greatest frequency and distinctness, they give a strictly spiritual interpretation.*

The force of these considerations is strengthened by the terms of the covenant itself, as no construction can exhaust their meaning, or give us a full impression of their authority, short of that which invests them with an essentially evangelical character. What but spiritual ideas are expressed in the following words—the simple but majestic introduction to the covenant? “The Lord appeared to Abraham, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect.” To say nothing of the revelation of Himself as the El-Shaddai,—God the Almighty, or, God the All-Sufficient,—the demand which Jehovah makes upon the patriarch is obviously nothing less than the unceasing devotion to Him of his whole inward and outward life. To walk before God is to live continually in his presence and under his smile, with a salutary dread of his displeasure and yet a satisfying assurance of his favour,—with the quick glance of his piercing intelligence directing every movement, and blending in the same expression, the severity which warns and the benignity that approves. It implies, in fact, that profound concurrence of will and fellowship of spirit with him which constituted the special distinction of Enoch, and which procured for him the twofold privilege of a testimony that he pleased God, and of a translation, with the exemption from death, to the heavenly inheritance. Now this demand of holy obedience is made not absolutely, but as an obligation arising out of the covenant itself, as appears from its immediate

* See Dr. Wardlaw on Infant Baptism, p. 32—41. Also with Gen. xvii. 1—8, Compare Rom. iv. 16, 17, Mat. xxii. 31, 32, Heb. xi. 13, 16^c Heb. xi. 9, 10.

connection with the very terms of the covenant:—"Walk before me, and be thou perfect. *And* I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly." It is presumable, therefore, that the peculiar *ground* of the obligation is, in its highest reference, of a character consistent with the *nature* of the obligation, and that as spiritual conditions are required of Abraham spiritual blessings are promised as his reward.

The first promise in the covenant is one of a numerous posterity,—"*Thou shalt be a father of many nations.*" And this promise was deemed so important that the Divine Being connected with it, as its memorial, a change in the patriarch's name,—a circumstance which in itself suggests something of much higher meaning than a multitude of descendants according to the flesh. It is true, including the children of Hagar and Keturah, the promise had to a certain extent a literal fulfilment; but, without insisting on their exclusion, an adequate exposition of its terms, and, especially, one according with the general idea of Abraham's representative character, is given, only as they receive a spiritual interpretation. That such interpretation is the true one—not only a possible but the principal sense intended—is placed beyond doubt by the application of the passage in the following instance to the whole posterity of the patriarch, as the father of the faithful. "Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end that the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham, *who is the father of us all, as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, &c.*"*

The second great engagement in the covenant is one of special providence and grace,—"*I will be a God to thee, and*

* Rom. iv. 16, 17.

to thy seed after thee." It seems impossible to deny the right of this promise to be classed with those exceedingly great and precious promises, by which we become partakers of the Divine nature. To bring out its whole meaning, by unfolding in detail the variety of its contents, would require us to find out the Almighty to perfection, as it virtually pledges to his people, in the supply of their necessities, the inexhaustible resources of His nature. It is not the promise of a single privilege, adapted to a peculiar exigency, but one of vast comprehension and of manifold blessedness. It is like the tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God, continually putting forth a new beauty, and yielding, without intermission, every kind of fruit that is pleasant to the eye and good for food; or, like a living fountain of water, from which every draught taken seems to unseal a deeper spring, or, by relieving the pressure upon it, to make it well up with greater freedom and force.

That such is the character of the promise is evident, not only from the breadth and expressiveness of its terms, but from the interpretation given of it in the frequent and varied references to it in the Old and New Testaments. Sometimes it is mentioned to enforce authority, and at others to encourage obedience,—as a ground of special obligation, and as a motive to entire submission.* Frequently it is associated with the highest spiritual blessings, as remission of sins, sanctification of nature, and everlasting felicity, and is now and then placed in such connexion with them as to suggest that it is the complement or sum of the whole.† By our Lord it is construed into an argument for the continued existence of the patriarchs, and for the

* Levit. xviii. 4, 5. xix. 3, 4.

† Jer. xxxi. 38. xxxii. 38—40. Ezek. xxxvi. 25—28. 2 Cor. vi. 16—18. Heb. viii. 10. Rev. xxi. 3.

final resurrection of their bodies from the dead. "But as touching the resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."* That is, the promise that God would be a God to Abraham and his seed was the promise of an everlasting blessing; if of an everlasting blessing, the patriarchs must be in the enjoyment of it now; if in the enjoyment of it now, they must be alive, as God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Their enjoyment of it, however, cannot be complete, as their life is only that of the incorruptible spirit, their bodies having long since returned to their native dust. But the promise extended to the *whole* man, and not to his spiritual essence merely, which, though the nobler part, is imperfect without its material organism. It therefore virtually contained the announcement of a resurrection from the dead, and will have its full verification to the patriarchs only in the re-union of their bodies and souls in the presence of God, where there is fulness of joy, and at his right hand, where there are pleasures for evermore. Considered in this connexion, the promise was one of the highest spiritual significance, infolding as in a germ, to be expanded and developed by the vivifying light and heat of the sun of righteousness, the most important doctrines and privileges of the gospel. It was in fact, with the assurance of all intermediate and subordinate good, the promise to Abraham and his seed of final and eternal blessedness,—that promise of which the great voice out of heaven only declared the fulfilment when it proclaimed, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his

* Mat. xxii. 31, 32.

people, *and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*"

The third engagement in the covenant gives to Abraham and his posterity the land of Canaan for an inheritance,—*"And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession."* This part of the covenant has already engaged our attention, and the result of our inquiry is, that the words have a double meaning, and promise under the gift of an earthly heritage, the bestowment of "a better and an enduring substance." Material forms are employed as the envelopment of spiritual ideas. The unseen and eternal is shadowed forth by the visible and the temporal. A present good specially imparted is exalted into the prophecy of a future and higher good. A land flowing with milk and honey is the mirror in which the well instructed eye "beholds the land that is very far off," and its immediate enjoyment is the stimulus to give increased activity to the faith which sees, and to the desire which pants for, "the inheritance of the saints in light." If further proof of this were required, it would be found in the following passage. Speaking of the patriarchs the apostle says; "These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things, declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for he hath prepared for them a city.*" One of "the promises" which the patriarchs had not received, that is, the fulfilment of which they

* Heb. xi. 13.—16.

were not permitted to enjoy, and on the ground of which they confessed themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth, was the promise of Canaan for an everlasting possession. But if this estranged their desire from earthly interests, and gave to their life the character of a pilgrimage to "a better country," it must have been from the connexion which Canaan had, as the type of its felicity and the pledge of its bestowment, with the heavenly inheritance they looked for,—“the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.” The promise which secured them a present, must have pointed to a future and a greater good, and with such distinctness that the attraction of the former was lost in the impression of the latter.

Besides, the land of Canaan, although distinctly assured to Abraham and his immediate descendants, was never really possessed by them. They dwelt in it, as “heirs of the same promise;” but only as sojourners in a strange land. “God,” says Stephen, “gave Abraham none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him.” Unless, therefore, the heavenly and the earthly were both included in the same promise, the one as the emblem and anticipation of the other, the promise to them was never verified at all. But God, virtually says the apostle, has dishonoured no pledge, has disappointed no hope. He has been faithful to every engagement, and especially to that which bound him to provide for them the better country which they desired; on which account he is not ashamed to be called their God. But the only sense in which the promise of Canaan can have been fulfilled to the patriarchs is that expressed in the words, “for he hath prepared for them a city.” If then God is not ashamed

to be called their God because of his fidelity to the stipulations of his covenant, as one of these confessedly failed in its literal import, it must of necessity have had a figurative accomplishment; and hence, such a connexion must have existed between the land of Canaan and the better country, that is, the heavenly, as to make the obtaining of the latter a verification, in its deeper meaning, of the promise of the former.* Should it, however, be said that a single fact—that of having prepared for Abraham and his seed a city—is the only ground on which it is alleged “God is not ashamed to be called their God,” it might be replied first, that the words contain a general principle capable of the widest application, and secondly, and more particularly, that no engagement in the covenant to which the Apostle obviously refers can be construed into an obligation, on the part of the Divine Being, to provide for them a heavenly inheritance, except the promise to give them Canaan for *an everlasting possession*; and, consequently, that this, as the shadow of good things to come, must be the very promise of which the fulfilment was demanded by the designation of Himself as *their God*, and on account of which fulfilment He is not ashamed of the peculiar relation thus assumed. The conclusion therefore is, that the covenant of which circumcision was the seal, was but the repetition in another form, with the omission of some particulars and the addition of others, of the covenants made with Abraham on two previous occasions, and that all three versions, substantially alike in themselves, are in their deepest import identical with the covenant of redemption “confirmed of God in Christ.”

But while the Abrahamic and Christian covenants are identical in principle, they are different in dispensation, *and this difference* is such as to be distinguished by a differ-

ence in the form of symbolical certification. Hence the rite of circumcision has given place to the ordinance of baptism. With the reasons for the change we are much less concerned than with the fact; and yet there was the most obvious propriety in it. As the difference between the two dispensations was as great as between a scheme of vast proportions and complicate arrangements wrought out and finished to its last result, and the brief and bare announcement of its fundamental idea, it was hardly to be expected that what had served to signalize the one would be chosen as a fitting memorial of the other. It was eminently instructive, and worthy of the great occasion, to mark by a special sign the transition from the Old to the New, and especially, that progress to entire completion of the purpose of God in Christ, of which little more than the bare intimation had been given to Abraham.

Besides, circumcision had respect to a covenant which promised the Messiah, and was virtually a profession of faith in his future advent. But when the Saviour had actually appeared, and finished the work that was given him to do, no room was left, as no necessity existed, for such a profession of faith. The significance of the rite was lost in the fulfilment of the promise, and, therefore, to continue its observance, except as a token of national distinction, or a concession to Jewish prejudice, would be not only to perpetuate an obsolete ceremony, but practically to affirm that the fulness of the time had not yet come. Moreover, circumcision had, under the ministry of Moses, acquired a peculiar application. While retaining its general character as a memorial of evangelical obligations, it had become the sign of the covenant in the restriction of its temporal provisions and its external religious privileges to the posterity of Jacob. These by a sovereign election God had formed into his visible

Church, with such a dispensation of the covenant in their favour as to give them, with exclusive possession of the land of Canaan, a great variety of religious advantages, of which the Apostle supplies a comprehensive summary in the words: "Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever."* Now when the Son of God had come, the ministry of Moses passed into the more excellent ministry of the Prophet like unto Moses. When he had become the Mediator of the New Covenant, the special "adoption" pertaining to the Israelites, as the "firstborn" and the "elder son," was enlarged to the comprehension of universal humanity; and the right they enjoyed of certain peculiar privileges disappeared in the offer of spiritual blessings to all nations. To have continued the use of circumcision, therefore, would have been to recognise the existing authority of the covenant in its particular relation to the Jews; and this, by perpetuating their ancient distinction, and acknowledging their claim to certain advantages over the Gentiles, would have been to deny, at least by implication, that in Christ there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision. If, in addition to these considerations, it is admitted, as some have thought, that circumcision "was intended as a sign that the seed in whom all nations were to be blessed, *should come from the loins of Abraham*," another reason is given for its discontinuance when the promise of his coming was fulfilled; for the seed having appeared, the sign in this use of it lost its meaning. The higher import of the ordinance, however, still remained, and as this belonged to the covenant in its purely spiritual character,

* Romans. ix. 4, 5.

it was transferred to a new rite, and perpetuated under the Gospel. This new rite is Baptism.

That the covenant in its perfect form would not be without some standing memorial which, like the ancient ceremony, would serve the double purpose of symbol and initiation, might, from its previous history, have been confidently expected. That Baptism answers to this requirement, and occupies by substitution the place of the Jewish ordinance, a variety of considerations will evince.

When the work of redemption had received its crowning act, our Lord thus commissioned his apostles : " Go ye, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Hitherto restriction had been the law of the Divine procedure ; henceforth universality was to be the rule. The Gospel having existed only in promise, the announcement had been confined to the Jews ; but promise having ripened into fulfilment, the good tidings were to go forth to all people. The proportions of the ancient temple, as the symbol of limitation, had just been enlarged to the capacity of a house of prayer for all nations ; and the fountain opened to the house of David for sin and uncleanness, breaking away from the boundaries which had hemmed it in to the inhabitants of Jerusalem, was now to flow outward to the uttermost parts of the earth. How then was this fact to be attested ? By what means was this new dispensation of the covenant to be certified ? Since the Gentiles were to be fellow-heirs with the Jews, and of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ by the Gospel, what was to be the sign of their admission to this fellowship, and what the seal of their fidelity to its obligations ? Baptism, our Lord distinctly teaches. With an extension of covenant blessings there was to be an extension of covenant

engagements, and the claim to one and the acceptance of the other were, like the stipulations of a former economy, to be set forth under the signature of a special religious solemnity. Circumcision having served its end was virtually abolished. Its authority naturally ceased with the loss of its peculiar significance, while its repeal was practically effected in the substitution of another rite in its stead. Baptism took its place less by sudden and violent transition, than by orderly and gradual succession. For a time, indeed, both ordinances were administered to the same person, as if to mark the point of connexion in the historical development of the two dispensations, and also to prepare the way for the discontinuance of one in the exclusive sanction to be given to the other. When the scenes of Gethsemane and Calvary, "the crisis of this world," had inaugurated a new economy, baptism obtained the force of a special enactment, and even rose to a position of undivided authority. The same covenant existed as that of which circumcision had been the seal, but another and higher form was given to it; and with this change in the form there was a change in its characteristic memorial. In other words, the offer to all mankind of the blessings formerly restricted to the Jews, was accompanied by the command not to circumcise all nations, but to baptize them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The argument is strengthened by the words of our Lord to Nicodemus: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." By the kingdom of God is meant, generally, "the whole family in heaven and earth," but, distinctively, the present commonwealth of Israel. It is the kingdom of grace in its connexion, and as a preparative for its enjoyment, with the *kingdom of glory*. To obtain admission into this kingdom the

new birth is required, and this is effected by the twofold operation of the Spirit and of water,—by the Spirit as to its substance, by water as to its sign; by the one as to its inward reality, by the other as to its outward profession. It is as if the Redeemer had said—A man can enter the kingdom of God *formally* only as he is initiated by baptism, and *really* only as he is purified by the Spirit. He is saved, as the Apostle otherwise expresses it, by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Thus understood, the declaration of our Lord obviously transfers to Baptism the office of Circumcision under the Old Testament.

The instructions of the Master were soon exemplified in the conduct of his disciples. On the very first occasion of their fulfilling his commission, they repeated the doctrine he had taught, and applied the rule he had given. To the multitudes at the Pentecost who under his discourse were “stung to the heart,” Peter said: “Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.”* The *promise* to which Peter refers can hardly be the promise of miraculous endowments, as it is said to belong to children, and to all that are afar off; the less so, indeed, as it seems improbable that the Apostle would hold out the hope of supernatural gifts as an inducement to repentance and baptism. Miraculous powers were, no doubt, for a limited period and a special purpose, included in the general gift of the Spirit; but the gift itself was of much vaster compass, and of far grander design. It was, in truth, that abundant and continued outpouring which gives to the Gospel its pre-eminence and glory as the dispensation of the

* Acts. ii. 38, 39.

Spirit; and hence its bestowment was the unsealing to mankind of the fountain of life, and the arrival of that day "in which prophecy declared living waters shall go out from Jerusalem."

Now the promise of this spiritual blessing, containing the germ and fulness of all spiritual blessings, belonged to "the promises made unto the fathers." It is second only to the promise of the Divine Word, and appears if not with equal frequency yet with equal distinctness in the same Scriptures. It runs through the ancient revelation like a deep under-current, every now and then forcing its way upward and welling out at the surface; or goes sounding along the prophetic ages like the "sound of abundance of rain," swelling at particular times to a loftier key, and modulated to a more distinct and emphatic articulation. To Jesus Christ, however, it belonged to give especial importance to this promise, and to fix upon it the almost undivided attention of faith. In him the promise of the Divine Word was fulfilled, and through him the promise of the Holy Spirit was to be verified. To repeat this promise, make it prominent, and connect it in a signal manner with himself, was the distinguishing characteristic of his ministry. He taught expectation to look off from himself to another, and yet to another only as realising more powerfully his own gracious presence. The promised seed was to re-appear in the promised Spirit, and the Messenger of the covenant was to come with greater power and glory to his temple in the Witness that should testify of him. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. *But this,*" adds the Evangelist, "spake he of the Spirit,

which they that believe on him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified."* The same promise is repeated, though with much greater fulness and variety, in the beautiful and tender address which he gave to his disciples just before his crucifixion, in which he tells them that it is expedient for him to go away that the Comforter may come; that if he depart he will send him, to guide them into all the truth, to testify of him, to shew them things to come; and, also, to convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. The sense in which the Spirit is promised in these passages is that in which his presence is the crowning excellency of the Christian economy. It is that, therefore, demanded by the work of Christ in order to its effectual application in the sinner's conversion, and the believer's sanctification. Grace is to be given, and this grace is living water, which, when a man receives, he is not only purified and refreshed himself, but becomes a channel to convey the gracious current to others. The water springs up within him as a well, and thus satisfies himself; and flows out of him as rivers, and thus makes him, what prophecy foretold he should be, "as rivers of water in a dry place."†

Now the promise of this grace, says Peter, is not limited but universal. It is the promise of that rich and all-includ-

* John vii, 37—39.

† It does not come within our design, or it would be interesting, to shew that the promise of the Holy Spirit given by our Lord, and fulfilled at the Pentecost, was a promise not only, nor even chiefly, of supernatural powers, but of a fulness of spiritual influences, having a special reference to his redeeming work, and intended, like redemption itself, for all ages and people. On this subject see a valuable collection of authorities, skilfully strung into a continuous testimony, in Note H of the Appendix to Archdeacon Hare's "Mission of the Comforter."

ing benediction of Divine mercy given in the Holy Spirit as the Witness of Jesus Christ. In other words, it is the general promise of salvation through Christ, applied and made effectual by the Spirit. On the ground of this promise the people are exhorted to place themselves in a condition to receive so great a blessing. They are commanded to repent, and to be baptized; that is, to put away the evil of their doings, and to enter by the washing of water, into visible connexion with the covenant which assures to them the sanctifying grace of the Spirit. Baptism is the outward ceremony by which they are ostensibly to unite themselves to the "promise," as repentance is the moral change by which they are to secure its fulfilment in the remission of their sins, and the gift of the Holy Ghost.

A similar view of Baptism is given in the following passage: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."* Although the Mosaic administration of the covenant was intended pre-eminently for the descendants of Israel, and no other people, as such, were allowed an interest in it, yet individuals of other nations becoming proselytes to Judaism,—the "devout persons" of the Acts of the Apostles,—were admitted by the customary rite of initiation to the enjoyment of its peculiar privileges. The office thus performed by circumcision under the law is in the above passage assigned to baptism under the Gospel. This passage, with the context, was written to correct the heresy of those who maintained the authority of the Law as a ground of justification, and virtually said to the Gala-

* Gal. iii. 27—29.

tians, "Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." The answer of the Apostle is, that salvation is possible only through faith in Christ, and that baptism devoutly received is the formal profession of this faith. It is the outward expression of that inward act by which the blessings of Christian fellowship are appropriated, and the obligations of Christian discipleship are assumed. "As many as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ;" that is, all who have submitted to the ordinance with a full recognition of its meaning, have entered into covenant relation with Christ; they have accepted his mercy as their Saviour, and pledged their fidelity to him as their Prince; and by this obedience of faith have become the true posterity of Abraham, and inheritors with him of the promised reward. Baptism has thus the very character of circumcision, as, when received in a purely religious spirit, it binds to the responsibilities of a Christian profession, and, at the same time, attests the existence of that spiritual relationship on the ground of which men become the seed of Abraham, and heirs according to the promise. Performing the office of circumcision, it also occupies its place and implies its repeal, availing with entire self-sufficiency, and therefore to the exclusion of every other rite, alike to Jew and Greek, to bond and free, to male and female.

To the Colossians the same Apostle writes: "In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: having been buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."* The expression in this passage requiring

* Colos. ii. 11, 12.

particular notice is "*the circumcision of Christ*," of which three dissimilar views may be taken. It may denote the actual circumcision of our Lord himself; or that purification of the heart required by him, and of which the rite in its deepest meaning was the sign; or baptism introduced by Christ in the stead of circumcision, and designed to serve in his Church the same general end. The first view is easily disposed of, as the personal circumcision of Jesus was not a circumcision "made without hands," and cannot in any legitimate sense be regarded as effectual to our "putting off the body of the sins of the flesh." Nor does the second interpretation, though containing in itself a strictly spiritual idea, suffice for the just requirements of the passage. To say nothing of the singular version it gives of the Apostle's words, it divests the phrase, "*the circumcision of Christ*," of all distinctive meaning, by making it an unnecessary and feeble repetition of the previous statement, "ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands." In both cases the circumcision is the same, that of the heart, with only a difference of language which marks no progress in the argument, and supplies no addition to the thought. It also destroys the exegetical significance of the following clause, "having been buried with him in baptism;" this being obviously intended as the explanation of the new and peculiar but striking expression, "*the circumcision of Christ*,"—suggesting the occasion on which the body of the sins of the flesh was put away, and specifying the service, baptism, as the *Christian circumcision*, in which the renunciation was solemnly professed. The third view then is the only one which appears to give the true idea of the Apostle. His argument is directed against the demand, so often put forth in the first age, of a literal circumcision. The Colossians,

he affirms, had no need of the rite in the letter as they had received it in the spirit, having by the consecration of themselves to God in baptism put away the accumulated mass of their defilement, and thus become "complete in Christ." But this implies that baptism signifies the same thing as circumcision, and in its room performs the same office.

It is unnecessary to multiply passages. These sufficiently establish the principle in question. Baptism is *Christian circumcision*. It was instituted by the Founder of our Faith in the stead of circumcision, as more convenient in its form, more significant in its character, and more extensively applicable in its use; as well, perhaps, as to abolish among a people the very appearance of a claim, founded on a peculiar national rite, to an exclusive interest in the "mercy promised to the fathers." As the Lord's Supper was quietly and almost imperceptibly grafted on the Paschal Feast, so Baptism, as if the natural successor of Circumcision, was adopted as its substitute; and as the covenant to which the two ordinances related was substantially the same, with only such difference of form as gave to one a more excellent glory than the other, the character of the first ordinance instituted was implicitly transferred to the second, and Baptism became under the administration of Christ the very seal of the covenant which Circumcision had been under the administration of Moses. Having the same meaning it serves the same end. It is "a seal of the righteousness of faith,"—"of the promise of the Spirit through faith,"—which promise the apostle Peter declares is unto us, and to our children, and to all that are afar off. It is thus not only a perpetuating memorial of the covenant engagement between God and man, but a distinct re-assertion of its terms, and an outward declaration

of its validity. It has the force of a solemn and visible ratification. God appears in the rite confirming our faith by a formal pledge to bestow all the blessings which the covenant provides, and the ordinance symbolically represents; and man appears in it, as comprehended within the design of the covenant, professing to receive the stipulated blessings according to their appointed method of communication, and engaging, as one consecrated to the Lord's service, "to observe all things whatsoever He has commanded him."

To the Lord's Supper belongs generally the same federal character. It is a commemorative celebration of the death of Christ, designed on the one hand to confirm to our faith the promise of eternal redemption, and on the other to pledge our entire acceptance of the terms on which the offer of so great a blessing is specifically made. It is thus not a mute instructor of redeeming truth merely, but a seal of confederate friendship with a redeeming God; not a silent memorial of the Saviour's crucifixion only, but the meeting together, on the common ground of his perfect atonement, of the Love which passeth knowledge, and the Faith that inherits the promises. In its observance no new obligation is created, but pre-existing obligations are certified as if by a special signature. Man engages to live not unto himself, but unto Him that died for him and rose again; and this profession admits him to the privilege of fellowship with the Father, and with his son Jesus Christ.

The ordinance, we have already observed, was founded on a previous institution. It was designed as the successor under the Gospel of the feast of the Passover under the Law, and its connection with it was significantly indicated by the fact of its establishment on the occasion when the

Redeemer kept the feast with his disciples for the last time. The two rites were united, though not blended, in the same general observance. The first terminated as the second commenced, and no perceptible interval marked their separation. As the waning light of the old economy faded into the brightening glory of the new, so the one ordinance passed away, having served its end in the progressive revelation of Divine mercy, as the other with higher adaptations and a deeper meaning, rose into view and took its place. The reason of this close connection in time was an actual correspondence of nature.

The deliverance of Israel from the bondage of Egypt, and their formation, on becoming an independent people, into an earthly national theocracy, were emblematical of the greater deliverance of mankind from the bondage of sin, and the establishment among them of a universal spiritual theocracy, or kingdom of God. As the event which the Paschal Supper was designed to celebrate had thus a twofold significance, the supper itself had impressed upon it a twofold office. It looked both behind and before, and, while bringing up the past, it foreshadowed and anticipated the future. The lamb slain to memorialize the redemption of Israel, was an eminent type of the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. The whole Paschal institution was symbolically prophetic of the one offering presented on Calvary, and the annual observance of the rite was prefigurative of the holy Supper as the sacramental commemoration of the Saviour's death. As the prophecy loses itself in the event, the shadow disappears in presence of the substance. The types, therefore, having their reality in the antitype, naturally terminated when the antitype appeared. "The true" having come, "the figure of the true" was no longer required. Christ our passover being sacrificed for

us, the Paschal sacrifice could not with any propriety be offered again ; and with the cessation of the sacrifice there must be a discontinuance of the feast; or, rather, with a change in the character of one there must be a change in the character of the other. As the typical had given place to the real, and the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ had succeeded—as an object to be specially remembered—the deliverance of the Jews by the stretched-out arm of the Lord, the supper, if continued at all, must be transferred to the more important event brought about, and thus converted from a national to a universal, and from a Jewish to a Christian, festival. And so in fact it was. With a change of sacrifice, there was a change in the feast upon the sacrifice. The Paschal lamb gave way to the Lamb of God, and the Paschal supper to the supper of the Lord.

The covenant of Divine mercy made from the beginning, and successively repeated “at sundry times and in divers manners,” now by literal specification, and again by typical rite and offering, was perfected for evermore by Jesus Christ as Mediator between God and man. All its engagements centred in him, and all its promises were of value for his sake. His death rendered it possible and declared it “sure”—was the condition of its existence and the confirmation of its truth. That mysterious cry, “It is finished,” to which heaven and earth responded in the fearful language of miracle, was the sentence which affirmed its completion, and the sanction which attested its validity.—In Scripture blood is synonymous with death, as the shedding of one is the cause of the other. It is more especially so with death as connected with sacrifice. Hence the blood of Christ is called “the blood of the everlasting covenant,” the ground on which it rests, and the ratification which gives it force. For the *same* reason we are said to be “purchased with his blood,”

to be "justified by his blood," and to have "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."

Now of this blood of the everlasting covenant the wine in the holy Supper is the Divinely appointed representative. It commemorates and declares, not the mere historical fact of its shedding (for that is told in every variety of narrative, and repeated in every form of announcement), but the shedding of it in sacrifice as a "propitiation for the sins of the world." It therefore *shews* its meaning as "a reconciliation for iniquity," and proclaims its value as the means of "everlasting righteousness." It thus becomes an exhibition of its true character as "the blood that maketh atonement for the soul," and an utterance anew, as by a fresh attestation of their reality, of the "better things" of which it emphatically speaks.* "This," said the Redeemer, taking the cup, and giving it to his disciples, "This is my blood; drink ye all of it;" a kind of language, says Zuinglius, by which Christ gives himself to us much more vividly and

* The dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, added to the doctrine of the New Testament, teaches that there is an actual repetition of the Saviour's sacrifice; that "in this divine sacrifice of the mass, that same Christ is contained and immolated in a bloodless manner, who once offered himself in a bloody manner on the altar of the Cross." It is difficult for error to be consistent. Transubstantiation declares that the wine in the Eucharist is the very blood of the crucified Jesus. But he who believes this is also required to believe that the offering in the mass is a bloodless sacrifice. Apart however from this inconsistency, the dogma is one of most obvious and pernicious excess. The exaggeration of truth till it becomes caricature, and the addition of dogma to doctrine,—this is the prevalent sin of the Roman Church.—Others again teach that the Eucharist is but a kind of hieroglyph, a means of instruction and, [therefore, of religious impression, by material signs. This to us appears to be defect. There is evil in both extremes. One unduly exalts, the other unduly depresses, the ordinance. The former defrauds the intellect, the latter impoverishes the heart.

eminently than if he had said, this is the symbol of my blood.* More than the idea of mere instruction, by means of a ceremonial supplement to the written word, seems to be intended. Our Lord connects the ordinance directly and intimately with his death as a sacrifice for sin, and makes it a visible re-assertion of all that the sacrifice expresses and ensures. "This is my blood of the New Testament," he farther declares, or, according to another version, "This is the New Testament in my blood." For testament *covenant* must be read, and then the Redeemer teaches, that the wine not only represents his blood, but represents it as shed for the redemption of the transgressions under the first covenant, that they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance; or, rather, as shed to ratify the covenant which provides such redemption, agreeably to the law spoken of by the Apostle which demands, that where a covenant is made in sacrifice, there shall be as the condition of its force and efficiency the death of the appointed victim. According to this view the cup has a strictly *federal* significance. It has such an intimate connexion with the second covenant as to indicate its true nature and design, and to set forth the solemn ratification, in the death of the cross, by which it acquired validity and effect. What is true of the cup is true of the whole rite. It is virtually a constant renewal of the promise of salvation through an atoning Mediator, and a pledge of the Divine faithfulness to make "the promise sure to all the seed." It is, therefore, as though the Son of God himself was outwardly present in the ordinance, and, presiding over its administra-

* Cum homo ille nobilis abiturus esset in regionem longinquam, panem ac vinum praebens, longe vividius ac peculiarius sese nobis dabat cum dicerit, Hoc est corpus meum, quam si dixisset, Hoc est symbolum corporis mei: etiamsi naturale corpus ablaturus ac coelo illaturus esset.—Zuing. *Christ. Fid. Expositio*.

tion, said to his disciples: "Here is the visible attestation of the Father's love, in the procurement of eternal redemption for you by means of my death. Eat, O friends; drink ye, drink abundantly, O beloved. For whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

But obligations are mutual. A covenant demands two parties, and contains reciprocal terms. Hence the Lord's Supper is the assertion of claims, as well as the seal of promises. It is not only the declaration of love on the part of God, but also the profession of faith on the part of man. While it repeats the most gracious stipulations of the former, it binds to the most solemn engagements the latter. The chief of these engagements, and one implying all the rest, is given in the command: "Do this in remembrance of me." This commandment is exceedingly broad. No transient reminiscence, no merely intellectual apprehension, will meet the requirement. It is not the memory of departed genius, or the recollection of unexampled benevolence even, that is wanted. The spirit of the precept goes far below its letter. It demands a clear and thoughtful view, a devout and grateful recognition of all that Christ became and did, "that he might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Remembrance is required, but remembrance in the sense of memorial is the true idea. "Do this—*εἰς τὴν ἐμὴν ἀνάμνησιν*—for a memorial of me." Remembrance in this meaning of it is more than a reverent formality of observance. It is a deeply spiritual act, to which belongs an inward fellowship with Christ's redeeming sufferings. An adequate commemoration of him is possible only to the heart in vital communion with him. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?"

The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" To eat in remembrance of Christ, then, is to eat not only with a distinct conception of his mediatorial character and office, but also with a faith which gives immediate participation with him as the true God and eternal life. It is to commemorate in particular his death, not however as a mere historical event, happening as a consequence of self-denying and heroic virtue, but as a predetermined and yet voluntary sacrifice for sin, and, therefore, to commemorate it with mingled humility and thankfulness and joyous confidence. To drink of the cup worthily is to perform the like significant act. It is to drink of it as representing the "blood of the new testament which was shed for many for the remission of sins," and, consequently, to profess a devout acknowledgment of the blood, and even reliance upon it, as that which atones and seals, which purges our conscience from dead works, and assures to our faith the rich variety of heavenly treasures which the testament itself contains and bequeaths.

To go through the entire service, in the spirit of the original command, is to have Christ before the view in a vivid impression of his character as our Representative and Substitute, to identify ourselves so closely with his work as to feel that we are crucified with him, and by eating and drinking to declare outwardly our full conviction of the propitiatory nature of his death, and our grateful and adoring acceptance of it as the ground of our peace with God, and our hope of everlasting life. Explaining to the Corinthians, on the authority of a distinct and separate revelation made by "the Lord" himself, the meaning of the word, "this do in remembrance of me," the Apostle says, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this *cup, ye do show* the Lord's death till he come." Now this *publication of the death of Christ must be of a kind answer-*

ing to the death itself, and this is constantly spoken of by the Apostle as an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour. It cannot therefore be a simple announcement of the mere circumstance of his death, but rather a setting it forth under the special aspect of its redeeming character; in which sense it becomes to us a profession of faith and a means of grace—the assertion of a steadfast belief in its design, and the instrument of a quickened consciousness of its power, to take away our sins. The Lord's Supper has thus a double relation and a twofold meaning. It is at once a promise and a claim—an acceptance and a pledge, and unites in the same service the offer of mercy and the profession of fealty. It is a Divine confirmation to our faith of the covenant of grace established in the death of Christ. It is also a voluntary reception of covenant blessings according to the appointed method of their bestowment,—that is, by the believing recognition of the Saviour's sacrifice as the procuring cause of our salvation, and the cheerful surrender of ourselves to his service as “called, and chosen, and faithful.”

The Sacraments, then, are a kind of embodied Gospel, a Gospel outwardly represented and epitomized in what Augustine calls “visible words.*” They are a monumental repetition of the principal facts, an impressive exhibition of the fundamental doctrines, and a continuous re-assertion of the leading promises of the Christian Dispensation. They gather up and combine in one view, condense and expound in one discourse, confirm and present in one solemnity, “the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven.” As signs they teach, as seals they certify; as one they discover to the reason the manifold wisdom of God, as the other they assure to the faith the unsearchable riches of Christ.

* *Quid sunt aliud quaeque corporalia sacramenta, nisi quaedam quasi verba visibilia?*—*Aug. Contra Faustus. Lib. xix. c. 16.*

CHAPTER III.

BAPTISM:—ITS SUBJECTS.

So far the two ordinances have been considered together, as comprehended under the general denomination of Sacraments, according to the definite application which the word has now acquired. In all the three respects stated,—as monuments of evangelical history, as signs of evangelical doctrine, and as seals of the evangelical covenant,—they present the same points of resemblance, and have substantially the same determinate character. But with much that is common to both there is something that is peculiar to each, and this peculiarity requires, in a just exposition of them, to be specially pointed out.

By some the two ordinances are considered in the relation of the first and second Sacraments, the right to one being made to depend on the previous observance of the other. There is undoubtedly a strict and beautiful propriety in this arrangement, as the admission to Christian discipleship by its recognised sign is the natural antecedent to the enjoyment of Christian fellowship in its most peculiar privilege. Among the institutes of the ancient economy it was ordained of the Passover, that “no uncircumcised person should eat thereof;” and though no similar law of exclusion from the Lord’s table is specified in the Gospel, yet, from *its very office*, as the rite of initiation into the general community of believers, baptism must be regarded as an appro-

priate, not to say indispensable, condition of participation in the Lord's Supper. At the same time there is this difference between the two ordinances, that while the faith which qualifies for what is called the second Sacrament gives a claim, where it has not been administered, to the first also, the conditions which entitle to the first do not necessarily imply a competency for the second, unless, indeed, we fall into the error, so common in the early church, of giving the bread and wine of the Eucharist to infants. This, however, supposes that infants are proper subjects of baptism, a supposition which, though very generally admitted, by no means commands a universal assent. On this, as on a kindred question—the mode of baptism—there are considerable differences of opinion among Christians, differences which many years of learned and zealous controversy have not been able to compose and adjust to one view. And though both these questions are, in comparison with the more important interests of the Gospel, as the mint and anise and cummin were to the weightier matters of the Law, it is necessary in a general consideration of the Sacraments to discuss them, however briefly, if only to assert the doctrine which our Community, with the greater part of the Church, regards as “the faith once delivered unto the saints.”

I.

First, then, as to the SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM. That adult believers not previously baptized are entitled to the administration of the rite, is beyond dispute the doctrine of the New Testament. Whoever else may be excluded from the commission given to the disciples to baptize all nations, those must be comprehended who, by repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, are already

in the highest sense members of that kingdom into which baptism is the outward and divinely instituted form of admission. Wherever the birth by the Spirit has been effected, there the birth by water cannot be refused. The existence of the internal reality is in itself a reason for the application of the external sign.

The privilege, however, does not belong to them alone. Undeniable as is their claim, it is by no means peculiar and exclusive. The reason for the administration of the rite, though included in the fact of regeneration, is not grounded in it, but rather in a previous fact. Baptism is an ordinance which stands at the door of the Church, to guard its entrance and to preserve its inner sanctuary from defilement, but not to make admission into it so restrictive as to be impossible to all, save those with respect to whom the evidence is decided that they are born again of the Spirit. It appears designed to give a formal introduction to all who, partially instructed in the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, desire by a fuller enjoyment of Christian privileges to learn the way to God more perfectly, and by a visible incorporation with the great body of believers to separate themselves in a solemn act of consecration to the service of the Lord. A state of conscious salvation, implying the forgiveness of sins and inheritance among them that are sanctified, is certainly not essential to Christian discipleship. Men may be disciples of Christ, in the sense of learners and followers, who are separated by a considerable interval of religious proficiency from those who have been quickened together with Christ, and made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus. The word of God which liveth and abideth for ever may have gained an entrance into their hearts, and the Holy Spirit descending like dew and sunshine may have quickened it into vital action, and, anxious for

a further and thoroughly saving acquaintance with Divine things, they may seek to enjoy the advantages of Christian fellowship by obtaining a recognised connexion with the Church. And who shall repel their advances, or discourage their desire? What authority can be pleaded for the denial to initiate them into the kingdom of God, even though they fall considerably below that experience which enables a man to affirm of himself that he has passed from death unto life? Believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, what doth hinder them to be baptized? Yielding a ready submission to the command which requires them to learn of Christ, and desiring for the more effectual performance of the duty, the privilege, legitimately conveyed, of associating in their assemblies with his chosen people, "can any man forbid water, that they should not be baptized?"

The prohibition, unsupported by any reason from the nature of the ordinance itself, would derive but little countenance from the sacred volume. The terms of the great commission are against it. The command to "go, and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," implies for the rite a latitude very much beyond the range of those who have become the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. "All the nations," coupled with the form of injunction, "disciple, baptizing," gives a scope and amplitude of charge which no ingenuity of criticism can fairly compress within the limits required for what is called "believers' baptism." To allege, as even certain advocates of infant baptism have alleged,* that to disciple, baptizing, "limits the baptizing to the extent of the success in discipling," is to impose on the words of our Lord a meaning which they will not bear. No such prior-

* Dr. Wardlaw, for instance. Appendix to Infant Baptism, p. 234.

ity of discipleship to baptism as this statement supposes is implied in the commission. It is true the success of the apostles could not exceed the willingness of the people to become disciples, but wherever the willingness existed, there the command to "disciple, baptizing," was to be obeyed. The baptism was not to be deferred until the act of discipling by other means was completed, as this would not be to "disciple, baptizing," but first to disciple, and then to baptize: it was rather to take place in connexion with the act itself, as the mode to be observed in giving effect to the injunction to "disciple." The participle "baptizing" has the imperative force of the verb "disciple," and being in the present tense requires to be construed as contemporaneous with it; it therefore simply expresses the manner in which the action of the verb is to be accomplished. The Gospel of the kingdom was to be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; all who heard the glad tidings and desired the privilege of a Christian training were to be received as disciples by baptism; and then, as a means to their ultimate enjoyment of all spiritual blessings in fellowship with the saints, they were to be taught to observe all things whatsoever the Saviour had commanded.*

This view of the commission is amply supported by facts. Various incidents in the evangelical history, and striking examples of apostolic practice, unite in a strong corroboration, shewing that baptism, so far from being the exclusive privilege of those who have received the renewing of the Holy Ghost, has a breadth of reference at least commensurate with the humble reception of Divine truth, and the consequent desire to lay hold on eternal life. That the

* See Halley on the Sacraments:—Baptism. His reply also to Dr. Wardlaw and Mr. Stovel.

baptism of John was administered without any special discrimination of character, at least, without anything like what is meant by conversion as the condition, is almost too obvious to require the notice. This is proved by the vast multitudes that flocked to him in the wilderness, respecting whom there is no evidence of any moral change beyond a "willingness for a season to rejoice in his light." The proof is strengthened by the fact that the people "went out to be baptized of him," as if on a general invitation, without the slightest apparent doubt of their unfitness to receive the rite; and still further supported by the circumstance, that the multitude of Pharisees and Saducees, publicans and soldiers, whom he called a "generation of vipers," were admitted to his baptism.* The truth is John baptized *unto* repentance, not *after* and *because* of it, binding the people by that very solemnity to a belief in the coming and a preparation for the kingdom of the promised Messiah. His baptism therefore, like that of Moses previous to the giving of the Law, was designed as a ceremonial purification of the whole nation, to prepare them for the advent of a Divine Personage and the inauguration of a New Economy.

But,—what it concerns us especially to notice,—though of John it is said "there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," yet of our Lord it is affirmed, that He made and baptized more disciples than John. It is true this statement must be understood with the limitation required by the circumstance, that at the time it was given John's ministry had begun to decrease; but after every reasonable modification on this ground, the language suggests a multitude of baptized persons out of all proportion to the number of those of

* Compare Matt. iii. 7—12, and Luke iii. 7—10.

whom there is any evidence, or the least probability, that they were born from above. Jesus himself observes : " The law and the prophets were until John ; since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every man presseth into it."* The forcible entrance into the kingdom of heaven simply expresses the eagerness with which the people, under the general excitement, applied for the outward sign of discipleship. This will appear on a comparison of two passages from the narratives of Matthew and Luke. " When John had heard in prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples, and said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or look we for another ?" After the messengers had returned with an answer to their question, our Lord addressed the multitudes in a discourse of which the report as given by both Evangelists is almost precisely the same. The difference is principally in one verse. In Matthew are the words : " From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force." In Luke we read : " And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, *being baptized with the baptism of John.*"† In both Gospels the verses occupy respectively the very same place in the discourse of our Lord. They are preceeded by the same declaration respecting the pre-eminence of John as a prophet, and followed by the same comparison of the men of that generation to children sitting and playing in the market-place. One therefore, we must think, is substantially the same as the other, and must be interpreted by it. The language of Matthew is figurative, that of Luke supplies the literal exposition. The first version speaks of an impetuous rush and a violent seizure, reminding us of the forcible capture of a city by a besieging army ; the second

* Luke xvi. 16. † Mat. xi. 12. Luke vii. 29.

explains this eager crowding of the people into the kingdom of heaven, by their "being baptized with the baptism of John." Expounded by these parallel places the statement of our Lord, "the law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of heaven is preached, and every man presseth into it," indicates the general and ardent wish that was manifested for enrolment among the followers of the new faith. The ministry of John passed into that of Jesus; the zeal of the people to press into the kingdom of heaven continued with little or no abatement; and as John's course declined it became true of Jesus, that he "made and baptized more disciples than John."

But how shall we account for this multitude of disciples? On the principle of their conversion it is plainly impossible. Comparatively few under the teaching of Christ were smitten with that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. The broad way, he himself tells us, was crowded, while the narrow path was all but deserted. Frequent are his expostulations with the people for their hardness of heart, and terrible are the judgments with which he threatens them, and threatens with tears, for their disregard of the things which belong to their peace. Even those who were accounted his disciples were not seldom offended at his doctrine, and on one occasion, after the delivery of that profoundly instructive and beautiful discourse recorded in the sixth chapter of John (a discourse which ought to have won them to a stronger attachment, and would, had their religious convictions been true and deep, have knit them to a close fellowship with him,) it is said, "from that time many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him." How, then, shall these facts be reconciled with the equally undeniable fact, that the people in large numbers and with vehement desire pressed

into the kingdom of God? On this principle only, that under the popular excitement occasioned by the ministry of John and continued under that of Jesus, many, moved by the presence of miracle or impressed with the power of truth, but falling short in their religious experience of that which is commonly meant by conversion, became in a general sense the followers of our Lord, and obtained from his disciples the customary sign of entrance into his kingdom.

Apostolic example serves for still further illustration. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost,"* is the exhortation of Peter to the multitudes who heard him at the Pentecost. In this address the command to repent is undoubtedly given before the command to be baptized. From this the inference is claimed that repentance is required as the condition of baptism. But whether this inference be just or not, the same cannot be said of the remission of sins and of the gift of the Holy Ghost. These are virtually promised to repentance and baptism, and must therefore follow and not precede them. For a much stronger reason than the mere collocation of words—on the ground of a strict grammatical necessity—they must be construed as subsequent in the Apostle's idea to the duties enjoined. The command is: Repent and be baptized *for* the remission of sins; which implies at least, however the preposition *εἰς* be understood, that baptism was not to be deferred until forgiveness had been obtained. But if baptism may precede forgiveness, it may also precede the faith which conditions that blessing, and if it may anticipate the faith, the rite cannot be the exclusive privilege of believers. Indeed, that the mere order of the words, "Repent and be baptized,"

* Acts ii. 38.

determines the order of the duties, so as to make one a reason for the other, is too much to be affirmed, and more than ought to be conceded. That there is an obvious propriety in the order cannot be questioned, and yet it is hardly fair to interpret the words as if the Apostle had said, Repent, and then be baptized. No such sequence appears to have been thought of. The design was not to point out any particular relation between the two duties, but to express their common relation to a certain blessing. Repentance does not look forward to baptism, but repentance and baptism conjointly look forward to forgiveness. Remission of sins, and not baptism, is the object to be aimed at, and repentance and baptism together are the means to its attainment.

The command to be baptized, as the command to repent; was addressed indiscriminately to all. With this command there must have been a very general compliance, for "*the same day* there were added about three thousand souls." Nothing is said of any withstanding the appeal of the Apostle, and nothing of any being rejected by him. There seems to have been no restriction, and but little selection. That the repentance of the vast number was genuine, as far as it went, need not be doubted, but that it was more than repentance, in the sense of self-condemnation and deeply awakened desire, appears neither from the narrative itself nor from the probabilities of the case. All that the history relates is that the people were pricked in their heart, and gladly received the Apostle's word, that is, particularly, his word commanding them to repent and be baptized in order to the remission of their sins; while the actual facts are, that three thousand persons, attracted together by the report of a miraculous visitation, and powerfully wrought upon by a discourse from an inspired

Apostle, are constrained to inquire, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" And though in the early part of the day all are impenitent, and many incredulous and scornful, yet before evening the whole number are baptized. That their conversion, in the sense of that change from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God in which we generally understand the term, was not impossible within so short a period, must be admitted, but that such conversion really took place in every instance can hardly be inferred from the evidence, the less so as the extraordinary circumstances and general excitement of the occasion were but little favourable to reflection and self-inquiry. But even were their conversion recorded as a fact, it is certain the Apostles could not, unless by special revelation, or by a faculty of discerning spirits approaching to omniscience, have had a satisfactory knowledge of it. No process that can be imagined could in the time specified have given them the requisite information. The space was far too limited for public addresses, private examinations, separate profession, and individual baptism. The baptism itself, especially if by immersion, must have demanded a good portion of *the same day*, and would have been altogether impracticable had it been preceded by an inquiry into the fitness of the subject to receive it. The truth then seems to be, that the Apostles, observing the general signs of repentance in the previously sceptical but now convicted multitude, regarded the application for baptism in every separate instance as a proof of individual repentance, and, on the ground of this compliance with the twofold command of Peter, proceeded at once to administer the rite.

Another instance is furnished in connexion with the first preaching of the Gospel to the Samaritans. This people *had been the dupes* of Simon, a celebrated sorcerer, who

had acquired over them an influence so great that they believed him to be the incarnation of Divine power. "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was baptized, he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done."* Here faith, in a general sense, is said to have preceded baptism, as indeed it must, in some degree, wherever its exercise is possible, be connected with the rite. It would be as extraordinary for a Christian man to baptize absolute heathenism, or absolute infidelity, as for either of these to apply for baptism. There is nothing, however, in the narrative to indicate "the proportion of faith" possessed by the Samaritans, much less to prove that the faith was that by which being justified, they had peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is simply said that they believed what the apostolic deacon taught concerning the Gospel, and thus believing received the sign of Christian discipleship. But if their faith may be judged of by that of the believing Sorcerer, it must have been uninstructed and imperfect in the last degree: and there is certainly little to justify the conclusion that it was in every instance accompanied by a much deeper acquaintance with "the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." The whole city appears to have been moved by the preaching and miracles of Philip, and a large number of the people (for the terms forbid a very limited computation) are said to have been baptized. Many of these no doubt were impressed with just views, and made rapid advancement in a saving experience of Divine truth; but of some, it is not too much to think, they were so imperfectly enlightened as to need

* Acts viii. 12, 13.

instruction in the very first principles of the oracles of God. This is the more likely as the case of Simon is not signalized as that of a man who had applied for baptism without the necessary qualification, and obtained it under false pretences. It is not recorded as one of exception to a general rule, as if to guard against the possible supposition that his ignorance, had it been known, would have presented no obstacle to his reception of the rite. It is mentioned rather incidentally and casually, without any reference to the propriety or impropriety of his being baptized, partly it may be from the public interest attached to his character, though more particularly from his desire, springing out of his previous addiction to magic, to receive, and to receive for money, the power of communicating miraculous gifts. But what ever may have been the religious condition of the rest, that of Simon himself is sufficiently obvious. That he was wrought upon, even to faith of some sort, by what he saw and heard, the narrative leaves no room for question; but what Church, professing what is called "believer's baptism," would admit to its fellowship any individual on the ground of a similar faith? The baptized magician was ignorant of the very simplest lessons of the Gospel, and was the victim of a delusion so awful that he thought the Holy Ghost might be bought with money. "I perceive," said Peter to him, "that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity." Nor does it appear that there was any studied concealment of his character, or any insincerity in whatever desire he had expressed for the Christian ordinance. His ignorance indeed was so transparent that it must have discovered itself on the slightest inquiry, and his unfitness to enter into the kingdom of God (if the condition of entrance was more than a willingness to learn of *Christ and to follow him*), was so palpable that it must have

impressed the least discriminating mind competent to form a judgment.

The baptism of the Ethiopian eunuch, recorded in the same chapter which contains the history of Simon, took place in a manner strongly favourable to our view. True the rite is said to have been administered on his professing to believe that Jesus Christ was the Son of God. But even admitting the faith spoken of to be that which justifies the ungodly, there is no proof that such faith was either demanded or exercised, as the verse which describes the eunuch's profession has no valid claim to be considered a part of the Scripture given by inspiration of God. Though of unquestionably ancient date, the evidence of its genuineness is so slender, that all the great editors of the New Testament agree in the refusal to acknowledge it. Excluding this verse, then, (Acts viii. 37) we are informed that an African Jew, treasurer in the court of Candace, Queen of Meroë, was employed, on his return from celebrating the Pentecost at Jerusalem, in reading Isaiah's prophetic account of the humiliation and sufferings of our Lord. Perplexed with the passage, not even knowing whether the prophet spoke of himself or of some other man, he requested Philip, who at the suggestion of the Spirit had accosted him, to expound the meaning of the prophecy. Readily acceding to his desire, Philip "began at the same Scripture, and preached unto him Jesus." Coming to a certain water, the eunuch expressed a wish to be baptized. Without hesitation the Evangelist immediately complied. The ceremony concluded, Philip miraculously disappeared, and the eunuch "went on his way rejoicing." Now it is worthy of notice, in the first place, that the Ethiopian treasurer was simply baptized into the general fellowship of the Gospel, without being constituted a member of any particular Christian society. It is

again to be remarked that, whatever his real character, Philip had but little opportunity of knowing it. Ignorant of his previous history, he had only the means which a casual intercourse of brief duration could give of ascertaining his present condition. It is still further to be observed, that no interval appears, much less one of formal preparation, between the eunuch's intimation of a desire to be baptized, and the actual performance of the service. No delay is suggested, no process of examination is instituted, no specific terms of qualification are exacted. Nay, though at the commencement of the interview he is wholly unacquainted with the Gospel, yet after a short course of instruction, extending at the most to a few hours, before he can well realize a true conception of Christ, or give satisfactory proof of evangelical repentance, he is admitted, at the very moment he requests it, to the outward privilege of Christian discipleship. These facts are surely inexplicable on the theory that baptism is a purely Church ordinance, and demands conditions identical with those required in order to salvation.

A similar conclusion, fortified by evidence more or less convincing, meets us in the consideration of other, not to say all the instances recorded in the Acts. Cornelius and his kinsmen were baptized immediately after their hearing the Gospel preached for the first time.* True they are said to have received the Holy Ghost; but this gift was not intended to qualify them for the rite, as on the day of Pentecost the rite preceded the gift, but simply to convince the Apostles of the claim of the Gentiles to an interest in the common salvation. Professor Wilson thinks that in Peter's rehearsal of the matter there is evidence that the descent of the Spirit was designed to serve another purpose.

* Acts x. 47, 48.

"That both Peter and the church in Jerusalem," he argues, "regarded this outpuring of the Holy Ghost on Gentiles as the seal of God to their faith and repentance is evident from Acts xi. 17, 18, 'Forasmuch then, as God gave them the like gift as he did unto us who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, what was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.'"* But surely this is raising on a narrow foundation a superstructure of disproportionate extent: or, rather, it is building without any foundation at all. The inference, whencesoever derived, is not included in the premises. The gift of the Spirit to Cornelius and his friends is pleaded by the Apostle not as the seal of God to their individual repentance and faith, but as the indication of His will "that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in the Gospel." Peter is accused of passing out of the ancient enclosure of the Church, and of offering to men uncircumcised the blessings that were thought to pertain exclusively to the Jews. He defends himself on the ground of a special revelation, and an extraordinary occurrence. A vision from heaven had instructed him that God was no respecter of persons. The lesson was repeated, and with most commanding emphasis, by the descent of the Spirit upon the Centurion and his company while listening to his address. This was the crowning attestation to the Divine purpose. By this circumstance God testified in the most remarkable manner, that "He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles," and hence to himself, the Apostle urges, there was left no alternative but to grant them a formal admission, or to be found fighting against God. The gift of the

* Infant Baptism, p. 365.

Spirit was to him the sign of a new Dispensation, and he pleads it as the proof not so much of favour to individuals as of mercy to a people. All that can be safely inferred from the history is that Cornelius, previously devout in spirit and exemplary for his charities, was wrought upon by the preaching of the Gospel to desire the privileges of Christian discipleship, and that Peter, warned of God not to reject him because he was a Gentile, "commanded him with his kinsmen to be baptized in the name of the Lord."

Lydia with her household was baptized by a river side at the close of the first instruction concerning Christ she had ever received. Casually meeting with the apostle Paul, she heard him speak to certain women who had come together for religious exercise, and on the spot, before returning to her house, and without, so far as can be gathered from the narrative, any probation whatever, she became a disciple by baptism. All that is said of her qualification for the ordinance is, that, previously a worshipper of God, the Lord opened her heart that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul; while of the religious condition of her family, absolutely nothing is said.

The Philippian jailor was baptized at midnight, in a prison, shortly after an earthquake had startled him from sleep, and the supposed escape of the prisoners had maddened him to the verge of self-destruction, before he had had time to master the barest elements of Christian knowledge, and, generally, under circumstances so exciting and confusing as to render intelligent reflection and a believing apprehension of Christ as the Saviour all but impossible. Some degree of religious awakening is no doubt implied in the inquiry, "What must I do to be saved?" and the impressions first produced were probably deepened by "*the word of the Lord*" which was spoken unto him; but not to

mention,—what is of special importance in the argument,—that no test is specified as the condition of his baptism, and no faith recorded as preceding his reception of the rite, the whole course of events was so rapid, and compressed within so brief a space, as to make it difficult to believe, on any theory of conversion not purely imaginary, that the jailor had other than the most partial and rudimentary acquaintance with the Gospel. At midnight he was a heathen, an hour or two afterwards he was a baptized disciple.

In the case of Saul also, actual forgiveness appears to have been subsequent to baptism, or at the most coincident with it. True he had passed through a previous process of repentance, and this repentance was most deep and bitter; he had spent three days in fasting and prayer even; but still, at the close of this period, he was without a “knowledge of salvation by the remission of his sins.” In this state Ananias found him, and addressing him said: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”* By this washing away of sins must be meant not a figurative but a real ablution, not a ceremonial observance but an inward purification. It was something real and not figurative that Saul needed. In a state of conviction and distress which left him without power to eat and drink, he wanted freedom from that which occasioned his agony. His sins started up before him like accusing spirits. He could obtain deliverance only in a certain way—by washing in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness. He must look away from himself to the cross, and believe on Him whose blood cleanseth from all sin; and then, and then only, would his heart be sprinkled from an evil conscience. Strictly speaking the washing he required was a purely Divine operation,

* Acts xiii. 16.

but in fulfilling the conditions on which this operation was promised he might not improperly be said to wash himself. To this duty Ananias urges him. He exhorts him to immediate action—to do that very thing the doing of which ensures acceptance with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost. There is no hindrance to present effort, and no need of further delay. The accepted time is now for both ceremony and reality, for the outward washing of water and the inward sanctification of the Spirit. Thus interpreted, the passage is parallel to that in which our Lord teaches: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” In both cases the language is highly figurative, and in both the sign and the thing signified are placed in a similar connexion with each other. Saul, as Nicodemus, is required to be alike baptized and renewed in order to salvation. The inference then is, that, at the time Ananias addressed him, Saul was not in the full and proper sense a believer. He was rather in that preliminary stage of religious conviction and distress which, from his own experience no doubt, he afterwards called the godly sorrow that worketh repentance unto salvation. Had his sins been forgiven there had been no need of the injunction to wash them away, or had Ananias known they were forgiven he would certainly not have enjoined upon him the duty. And yet, though still an unpardoned sinner, no hindrance existed to his baptism. “Why tarriest thou?” says Ananias, “Arise, and be baptized.”

Without further extending the consideration of particular instances, it may be generally observed, that the baptisms recorded in the Acts of the Apostles took place, on the supposition of the conversion of their subjects, with singular and unaccountable precipitancy. Most of them occurred on *the very day in which the applicants first heard the Gospel,*

without apparently the institution of any inquiry designed to ascertain their fitness for the ordinance, before, it may be presumed, the work of conversion could have developed itself to any decided and satisfactory result, and long anterior to the time usually required for proving the genuineness of repentance by the production of its appropriate fruits. It is certainly remarkable that there should in every instance be the absence of that probationary discipline, and especially of that formal profession of faith, now universally demanded by Baptist churches as the terms of admission to their fellowship; and also that in the baptism of large multitudes there should be no evidence of a careful separation of persons—no appearance of that jealous discrimination of character which might have been expected from Divinely instructed apostles, anxious to preserve a Christian ordinance within its just limits of observance, had baptism been the exclusive privilege of that faith which unites the soul to Christ, and gives peace with God. To which remark it may be added, that in the several cases of household baptism related in the evangelical history, no mention whatever is made of the repentance and faith of the members, even where the conversion of the head of the family is distinctly specified.—All these with other considerations of the like kind taken together, as expository of the Divine command to disciple, baptizing all the nations, forbid the restriction of the initiatory rite of Christianity to those who have received the blessing it symbolises in the birth of the Holy Spirit, and demand its extension at least to those who have begun to “ask their way to Zion with their faces thitherward.”

This conclusion is met by the objection, that in the New Testament faith and baptism are sometimes so connected as to suggest that one is the proper antecedent and legitimate condition of the other. “When they believed Philip

preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, they were baptized." "And many of the Corinthians hearing *believed*, and were baptized." He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved.* This arrangement of terms, however, giving to belief a precedence of baptism, is a very slender foundation on which to raise a theory. The principle, indeed, is one which may be pleaded on both sides of the controversy, as we have just seen in the case of Saul, and as is still further evident from 1 Cor. vi. 11, "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified." By washing many Baptist writers, with others, understand baptism, according to which interpretation baptism comes before sanctification, and sanctification itself precedes justification. The mere collocation of words, especially in the absence of a logical connexion, or a natural priority of duty enjoined, is a very insufficient ground on which to establish a doctrine or to determine an order of action.

The first two of the above passages, with others similar, are of no value whatever in settling the question, who are proper subjects for baptism? They give no instruction, they strengthen no argument. They are nothing more than brief historical notices of the effect in certain instances of the preaching of Philip and of Paul. They do not say, or even suggest, that faith was demanded or exercised as the pre-requisite to baptism, but simply that the Samaritans and Corinthians hearing the Gospel, believed and were baptized. Supposing, however, that the order in which the facts are stated compelled the admission that the parties believed before they were baptized, what conclusion of importance would be gained? The admission would be of little service to the dispute, unless the quality of the faith were clearly defined. There is a higher and a lower kind of

* Acts viii. 13—xviii, 8, Mark xvi. 16,

faith, a faith just elicited and one developed to great activity, a faith too feeble to support itself and one strong enough to remove mountains, a faith which feels after the things of the Spirit and one which discerns them in a vivid intuition. The faith spoken of may have been of the first rather than of the second description. It was probably nothing more than a ready acknowledgment of truths listened to for the first time, accompanied with the desire of still further instruction—that state of willing reciprocity, in fact, which always and naturally marks the earlier stages of Christian progress. It is certainly too much to assume that the faith was essentially saving faith,—that high spiritual exercise of mind, or, rather, that deep pulsation of “the heart with which man believeth unto righteousness.” But even if it was, of what advantage would it be in the general argument? What assistance would it lend towards a just decision on the question at issue? No test of fitness for the ordinance, much less one of invariable application, could be legitimately inferred from it. An incident in history is not of itself sufficient as a foundation for doctrine. The circumstance of faith preceding baptism in some cannot demonstrate the necessity of the like faith as the condition of baptism to all. To those who point to such instances of faith, and reason upon them, it is enough to say, Baptism is rightly administered when faith is truly exercised. Whatever the real qualification for the rite conversion must contain it. The greater includes the less, the faith that justifies the ungodly comprehends every inferior degree of faith; and hence the Samaritans and Corinthians having “first trusted in Christ” were, *a fortiori*, by a claim of even extreme validity, entitled to the service which formally consecrated them to God.

These remarks apply in principle to the still more important passage in Mark: “He that believeth and is bap-

tized shall be saved." Some additional observations, however, of more immediate reference, may not unreasonably be expected. By the advocates of believer's baptism, this passage is thought to have no doubtful utterance in support of their views. Deceived by the juxtaposition of the terms belief and baptism, and overlooking the main if not the sole design of the Saviour's address, they urge it, with wearying repetition, as decisive evidence that only believers are to be baptized. It is a circumstance, however, which ought to moderate their tone, if it does not weaken their confidence, in reasoning upon it, that the passage is rejected by some of the ablest textual critics as no part of the sacred canon. The weight of testimony against it may be inferior to the considerations in its favour, yet so long as the proof of its genuineness lacks anything of completeness, it can be pressed into the controversy only as a doubtful auxiliary, or at most, as a text whose right to serve in the dispute is liable to some degree of suspicion. But even admitting its claim to plenary authority, how does it affect the question under review? and what is the actual service it renders to the doctrine it is employed to establish? First assumed as an appendage to the baptismal commission recorded in Matthew, or rather, as another version of the commission itself, it is then cited as fixing a limit to the commission,—as authorising in effect the baptism of only such of "the nations" as "believe to the saving of the soul." But the assumption is made on insufficient grounds. The use of the like terms, though in a widely different construction, is a slender proof of identity of discourse. The address in Mark appears to have been given by Christ on the day of his resurrection, that in Matthew many days subsequently; the former at Jerusalem on his first appearance to his disciples, the latter in Galilee after he had

shown himself alive by many infallible proofs ; the one on a mountain appointed by Jesus, the other " to the eleven as they sat at meat."

With this difference of time and circumstances, there is a corresponding difference of instruction. In Matthew there is a command to baptize all the nations, in Mark no trace of such command can be discovered ; the one Evangelist answers the question, Who may be baptized ? the other satisfies the inquiry, who shall be saved ? This latter fact, indeed, has a significance on its own account, and contains the only reply that need be given to the argument founded on the words in Mark. Were it conceded that these words are supplemental to those in Matthew, nothing important would be gained by it, as no grammatical ingenuity could fairly construe the supplement into a modification of the original command. Let the address of our Lord read thus : " Going forth, disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." How does this final declaration restrict, or qualify, or lose itself in, the preceding commission ? Where is the connexion which can be supposed to modify, or the similarity which can be taken as the proof of identity ? Instead of sameness or even resemblance, there is an actual difference of subject in the two parts of the address. There cannot therefore be a continuation under another aspect, or with diminished force, of the same idea. The thought of the passage rises and enlarges with a beautiful consecutiveness and a steady progress. The command to disciple by baptism is followed by the injunction to teach, and the injunction to teach by a specification of the grounds on which the whole will be suc-

cessful to the salvation of the individual. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved" gives no instruction in regard to baptism. By no process of grammatical analysis can a command to baptize or to be baptized be extracted out of the words. The command is assumed as previously given, and the terms of compliance with it are supposed as already settled. Proceeding on this assumption, the passage advances to a higher position, and carries the mind forward to a grander truth. It brings into view the question of personal salvation, and concerns itself with that alone. Its simple doctrine is, that belief and baptism are required in order to the enjoyment of this blessing. Of the relation of either of these to the other it says nothing, it logically implies nothing. It affirms only that both together are the appointed condition on which salvation is to be obtained. In short, Apostles are not told who they shall baptize, but men are informed how they may be saved. Besides, if baptism with water is in any sense conditional to salvation, to no one can the rite be denied who applies for it in a becomingly serious spirit. The terms of salvation are with the individual who desires to be saved. To him alone belongs the power of acceptance or rejection, and, willing to accept them, no one can surely be intrusted with the fearful responsibility of refusing him either of them. The conclusion then is, that those passages in which faith is associated by a verbal connexion with baptism present no valid objection to the doctrine we have deduced from the great commission, and illustrated by apostolic example,—that while believers are unquestionably entitled to the Christian ordinance, those also have a claim to it who, desiring to learn of Christ, seek to become members of the kingdom of God.

II.

But the extension of the rite to even these does not bring us to its utmost limit. Baptism has a reference of still greater comprehension. It includes "little children" also, and for the same reason that it includes one it includes all. No discrimination can be made on the ground of peculiar fitness or superior claim. As the Scripture concludeth all equally "under sin," it places all equally "under grace." The view that would confine the privilege to children of godly parents has no solid foundation on which to rest. It proceeds on the assumption that the right of the child arises immediately from his connexion with the parent. "If it be necessary," says Jonathan Edwards, "that *adult* persons should make a profession of godliness, in order to their own admission to *baptism*, then undoubtedly it is necessary in order to their *children* being baptized on their account. For parents cannot convey to their children a right to this sacrament by virtue of any qualification *lower* than those requisite in order to their own right; children being admitted to baptism only as being, as it were, parts and members of their parents." "Before the coming of Christ," says Dr. Wardlaw, "the covenant of grace had been repeated, and under that covenant there existed a Divinely instituted connexion between children and their parents; and the sign and seal of the blessings of the covenant were, by Divine appointment, administered to children.*" This "ancient connexion between parents and children," he argues, "so far from having been abrogated" is continued under the Gospel, in accordance with which baptism, the new sign and seal of the covenant, has become the exclusive privilege of those children who have believers for their parents. Following in the same track, Professor Wilson observes: "We hold that the

* Infant Baptism, p. 20.

Abrahamic covenant recognises a peculiar relation between the people of God and their *infant* children, in virtue of which relation it was the duty and privilege of covenanted parents under the old economy to have the seal of circumcision applied to every male of their family on the eighth day. By sovereign federal engagement was this privilege secured to infant children of Church members, both Jews and Proselytes, while the offspring of those who "were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise," were of necessity left to the uncovenanted mercies of Jehovah.* From this "law of admission to the Old Testament Church" he infers the law of admission to the New Testament church, and hence affirms that the infant children of none but professed believers are legitimately entitled to baptism.

In these statements it is quietly assumed that the "connexion" spoken of was between parents and their *infant* children. A very slight reference to the terms of the covenant, however, is sufficient to shew that no distinction is made between infants and adults, and that no connexion between parents and children is recognised which does not include with the child of eight days the man of mature age. The terms are: "I will establish my covenant between me and thee *and thy seed after thee in their generations.*" No exclusive privilege is thus accorded to infants. The covenant has respect to the "seed," the natural offspring of the patriarch in every successive generation. There is no allusion whatever to infants, as such, but only to infants as comprehended in the more general term of Abraham's posterity. This view is confirmed by the manner in which circumcision, as the sign of the covenant, is instituted. "Every male among you," says Jehovah, shall be circum-

* Infant Baptism, p. 412.

cised;”* not, as in the authorised version, every *man child*, for the Hebrew word has no reference to age, but is simply descriptive of sex. In a subsequent verse, it is true, the eighth day is specified as that on which the rite shall ordinarily be observed, and for this uniformity of time various reasons of propriety and convenience might be alleged. But it seems to indicate the more expansive and general character of the “token of the covenant,” that its previous establishment takes place without any allusion to infancy whatever, and especially as afterwards, when obedience is enjoined under the threat of excision from the people, while the same indefinite term, “male,” is used, a form of language is adopted which contemplates the possibility of a voluntary disregard of the covenant: “The uncircumcised male who will not be circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin, that person shall be cut off from his people: he hath broken my covenant;”† to which in further confirmation must be added the fact, that the neglect of the parent in infancy did not invalidate the claim of the child in after life. If then “the ancient connexion between parents and their children,” on the ground of which circumcision was administered, has not been abrogated, if the “relation” which is said to have existed between them under the Abrahamic covenant, and which gave the child a peculiar inheritance in the faith of his parent, is perpetuated under the Gospel, so that a child is now entitled to baptism as formerly one was entitled to circumcision, as the term children means natural offspring of whatever age, the children of professed believers even though adults must be baptized, simply in virtue of the faith and piety of their parents. But if not adults, then, *for such reason*, not infants.

But what is the nature of this “Divinely instituted con-

* Gen. xvii. 10. † Gen. xvii. 14.

nexion," and how is it made out? If it is one by which the child derives his covenant relationship immediately from his parent, then the parent occupies to his child the place of Abraham, and becomes to him in effect the Head of the covenant. This, however, is an honour to which no one can properly aspire. The parent, like his child, can never be more than a member of the covenant. He inherits only on grounds common to all other members. The right which he conveys is involved in the very fact of his paternity, and is therefore independent of his will and irrespective of his piety. He transmits certain privileges because he transmits the natural relation which implies them, and hence the child, as also the parent in every generation upward to the patriarch himself, is entitled to the seal of the covenant not for the faith of his immediate progenitors, but because "he is a son of Abraham." This is surely affirmed by the plainest implication in the very terms of the covenant. "I will establish my covenant," says Jehovah, "between me and thee and thy seed after thee *in their generations* for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and thy seed after thee." The "Divinely instituted connexion" is thus not immediately between the parent and the child, but remotely between Abraham as the Head of the covenant and his seed in every successive generation; and it is this connexion of the Head with the members that gives to every separate individual a claim to the rite by which his interest in the covenant is attested.

"I maintain," says Dr. Halley, "that no Hebrew child was ever circumcised on account of the faith or piety of his father, except the sons of Abraham. My reason is, no infant could have been circumcised on account of the faith or piety of his father, when he would have been, with as much propriety, circumcised, according to the Divine law, had his

father been a notorious unbeliever, or an open profligate. My illustration is, the sons of David were circumcised according to the same law, and, therefore, for the same reason, as the sons of that worshipper of Baal, Ahab, and of that wicked woman, Jezebel. We do not find that, to all his sins, Ahab added the horrid crime of neglecting in his family the great law of circumcision; but even if he had, it would, with propriety, have been restored after his death, on account of the descent of his children from the patriarch Abraham.* If, then, under the ancient economy, a child was not circumcised on account of the faith or piety of his father, but because of his relation to him in the person of whom God entered into covenant with a whole people, then, on the principle of analogy, children under the Gospel are not to be baptized on the ground of the faith or piety of their parents, but because of their relation to Him who "is the Saviour of all men, specially of them that believe." But as this relation is not of descent but of nature, not of race but of kind, not of individual piety but of economical arrangement, not therefore restricted to separate families but common to "all the nations," the children of believing parents are not the only children entitled to the privilege of baptism.

But it is said that circumcision, as the sign and seal of the covenant, was in its strictest sense the initiatory rite of the ancient Church, and as such was limited in its application to the posterity of the patriarch in the line of Isaac and Jacob. "The federal transaction with Abraham," Professor Wilson asserts, "recognised the infant children of none but parties within the covenant, or church members, as proper subjects of circumcision." "This ordinance, as the seal of the covenant, belonged exclusively to the heritage

* Reply to Dr. Wardlaw, p. 138.

of God, comprising Abraham's descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob, together with such Gentile proselytes as joined themselves unto the Lord in the great congregation."* Similar language is held by Dr. Wardlaw. "The sign and seal of the covenant," he observes, "were confined to the descendants of Abraham in the line of Isaac, and all his descendants in that line constituted, under the then existing dispensation, the visible church of God :"[†] from which it is inferred, that as the natural seed was the type and foreshadowing of the spiritual seed, the same law of restriction applies to baptism in the Church of the New Testament as applied to circumcision in the Church of the Old. But to make the analogy conclusive in argument it must be maintained, that the child of Christian parents inherits the spiritual relation as the child of Jewish parents inherited the natural, that the one becomes a Christian by birth as the other became an Israelite by descent. All who, according to a certain genealogy, could say, "We have Abraham to our father," were by Divine ordination members of the national Church, and their children, inheriting by the same title, were admitted by circumcision to the same privilege. To complete the parallel it must be asserted, all who, according to a certain economy, can claim a spiritual descent from the father of the faithful are members of the Church of Christ, and their children having a similar relationship, are entitled by baptism to the same distinction. This however cannot be affirmed. The analogy fails where its point is most required. It may be said, the child was born a Jew, and was *therefore* circumcised ; it cannot be said, the child is born a Christian, and must *therefore* be baptized.

The argument, failing in its conclusion, is also unsound

* *Infant Baptism*, p. 400, 409. † *Appendix*, 276.

in its premises. It proceeds on the supposition that the descendants of Abraham in a particular line constituted the ancient Church, and that circumcision, as the sign of the covenant, was restricted to them. That these descendants were marked out for a special mission, and were watched over by a special providence,—that they were formed into a separate community—"the commonwealth of Israel"—and were honoured by an economy of responsibilities and privileges unknown to every other people, there can be no doubt; but that their connexion with the covenant of Abraham was so peculiar as to give them an exclusive interest in its appointed sign and seal, is much too questionable to command our assent. To them it belonged eminently, but not solely. Within certain limitations it was theirs alone; according to a more general interpretation they only shared with others. We have already seen that in the more extended and instructive version of the covenant there is no restriction whatever. The whole of Abraham's posterity is included, and circumcision as "the token of the covenant" is prescribed for every male member. True when Jehovah, in answer to the prayer, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" promised to multiply and make him great, he instantly added, "But my covenant will I establish with Isaac." On this great stress is laid, as proving the election of the patriarch's family in one branch of it, and its rejection in another. The inference however may be admitted, and yet neither the election be exclusive, nor the rejection entire. Let it be granted, as it must be granted, that there is something intentionally emphatic and special in the words; the particular reference may be legitimately construed in a sense consistent with a more extended application. It is in fact much more conceivable that a peculiar interest in the covenant was given to Isaac, while a more general claim

was reserved for the whole of Abraham's seed, than that the posterity of Isaac was constituted the extreme boundary of its influence, while the descendants of Ishmael and Esau, lying beyond this limit, "were left to the uncovenanted mercies of Jehovah."

Isaac and his posterity were set apart for a special purpose. They were chosen not personally as objects of peculiar favour, but economically as instruments to a great design. They were made the limited platform of a mighty operation extending its influences over the whole area of humanity—the particular sphere within which was to be developed a plan for the deliverance and spiritual culture of our race throughout all time. If singular privileges were connected with their election, they were privileges rather incident to their position than consequent on their character. They were given not so much for the sake of the people themselves, as because of their relation to that extraordinary "crisis," which formed at once the starting point of their history and the culminating step of their progress. The world was to be redeemed by the Seed of the woman, and to signalize the character and mission of the Redeemer, to set forth the dignity of one and the grandeur of the other, a whole nation, from its rise in a single family, was to be consecrated to his advent. To this distinction the descendants of Abraham by Isaac and Jacob were chosen, who became in consequence pre-eminently the Messianic people. The world was to be prepared for its redemption, and also for its Redeemer; for the latter by a gradual foreshadowing of his person and work, by pre-intimations of his coming glory as "the true Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," and of his inevitable agony as "the Captain of our salvation made perfect *through sufferings*;" for the former by a course of discipline

and training adapted to a state of childhood, exercising the senses to the discernment of both good and evil, developing the religious faculty to the perception of spiritual truth and the acknowledgment of religious duty, impressing on the mind, by means of ceremony and symbol, prophecy and song, ideas of law, sin, atonement, forgiveness, sanctification,—by imparting, in fact, “under tutors and governors,” such a preparatory education in the deepthings of God as would ultimately “bring us,” that is the whole world, “unto Christ.”

For this preliminary discipline as special agents so a particular people were required, and the people selected were the seed of the patriarch in the line so often specified. They were set apart to receive and preserve “for our learning” the earliest utterances of the Divine Word, to enjoy and reflect across the nations the dawning splendours of the Sun of righteousness. To them the “salvation ready to be revealed in the last time” was shadowed forth in vivid and suggestive imagery, was anticipated in easy and familiar lessons. Redemption was the central idea of their history, as a Mediator was the central fact of their economy. Christ was the rock of which they drank and the manna on which they were fed, the Lamb which bled for their sins and the High Priest who entered, “not without blood,” into their most holy place. The whole Gospel was preached to them, as to Abraham himself, “aforetime,” but preached in parable* and ritual observance, by various forms of material representation suggesting spiritual ideas, and in simple discourse adapted to “babes, unskilful in the word of righteousness.” In this educational process they were representative of the race, not of the future Church only, but of entire humanity. The elementary training through

* Heb. ix. 9.

which they passed was discipline for the world. They were thus taught, that "all might come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." "In them, therefore, 'we all had our conversation in time past.' We lived with them at the same school, and learnt with them the same lessons."* In dealing with them God dealt with us; in teaching them he gave instruction for all time; in blessing them he blessed all nations of the earth.

It was, hence, not as having an exclusive interest in it, but as being included in a particular design respecting it, that the Divine covenant was specially established with the children of Isaac and Jacob. Their peculiar relation arose from their peculiar mission. Chosen to give to the world, "as concerning the flesh," its promised Redeemer, and to prepare it by a course of suitable training for its future redemption, they naturally inherited privileges which no other nation could share. Extraordinary advantages accompanied, because they were really implied in, their extraordinary position; they belonged to the grand idea of which their history as a separate people was the continuous exposition. The singularity of their claim, however, did not extend beyond the limits of the purpose they were elected to accomplish. While in a restrictive sense—a sense agreeing with the particular service they were honoured to render—the covenant was made pre-eminently in their favour, according to a freer and more general interpretation, it was made as certainly with their brethren in other lines of descent from their common progenitor. The proof of this lies in the fact, that circumcision was administered by Divine appointment to every descendant of Abraham. No exception was made at the time

* See *Binney's admirable Discourse*, "The Law our Schoolmaster."

of its institution, and no exception was ever after specified. Ishmael was circumcised as well as his father, and Esau equally with his brother. Within the circle of the patriarch's family no restriction was ordained, and none was observed. He was the radiating centre from which the rite proceeded. It descended from him, the parent stem, in every direction, and ramified outward, as well as upward, to every branch. The national Church of the Jews defined no limit, and constituted no barrier to its application. Existing before its establishment, it had a range beyond its pale. "Moses gave unto you circumcision," says our Lord, "not because it is of Moses, but of the fathers."* Moses was specifically for a people, the fathers were more generally for the race; the one was associated with a preliminary arrangement, the other stood in connexion with a fundamental idea; the former gave us the "patterns of things in the heavens," the latter received and transmitted their principle;—and circumcision belonged rather to the principle than to the pattern, to the original conception than to the subsequent scheme. It was hence no distinction of individual piety, and no sign of membership in the church. It did not belong to the Jewish Church as such. It was antecedent to its proper establishment, and was even suspended, or at least not observed, for forty years during which the ritual of that Church was prescribed.† Though it became the required condition of communion in the passover,—the consecrating sign admitting to the symbolizing ceremony,—it was not in any strict sense an institute of that economy which acknowledged Moses as the head. It was rather the token of that larger and simpler constitution, that grand and holier design, that original and all-embracing covenant of redeeming mercy, on the basis of which the dispensation

* John vii. 22. † Joshua v. 2—7.

of Moses was constructed, and in exposition and furtherance of which it was fashioned.

The conclusion then is obvious. By Divine ordination circumcision was administered to all the descendants of Abraham. As the rite had only one general meaning, and no deviation from this is intimated in any of its applications, it must have been administered in its proper character, as the sign and seal of "the mercy promised to the fathers;" and thus administered, it became to Ishmael and Esau, as well as to Isaac and Jacob, such an attestation of their interest in the "holy covenant" as to assure them of at least some, and these the most important, of its included blessings. Even Dr Wardlaw admits this, and thereby furnishes an answer to his own argument in favour of restrictive infant baptism. In reply to Dr Cox and others, who had said that circumcision was the sign of the covenant in its earthly aspect—as the promise of Canaan—he observes: "By the very circumstance of circumcision having been administered to so many others besides Isaac, it failed to serve the purpose thus assigned to it: it was no distinction of Abraham's posterity by Isaac, but was common to them with other tribes and nations sprung from the same stock, and yet having no part in the earthly inheritance. Might not this circumstance have suggested to Dr Cox's mind, that, connecting circumcision with the covenant of redemption, there was, in its administration to others besides Isaac, an intimation intended, that, although to serve particular purposes in the Divine economy, the covenant was established with them, yet its best blessings were not to be confined to one portion of Abraham's family, or even to his posterity at large?"*—The position we have taken is thus vindicated. The reasoning from analogy which derives the

* Wardlaw on Baptism, 57.

right of children to baptism from the faith or Church membership of their parents, is unsound at its commencement. Circumcision was not the acknowledgment of personal piety, nor the sign of admission to religious fellowship. It was the token of a covenant, and not the ordinance of a Church. It was no distinction of Abraham's posterity in any single branch, but the common privilege of all his seed in every line of descent. Hence the argument which infers from its supposed limitation to the offspring of Isaac and Jacob a similar restriction for infant baptism to the children of professed believers, gives way at its very foundation. There was no such limitation in the one case, and therefore analogy points to none in the other. The premises are assumed without proof, and consequently the law is prescribed without authority.

III.

In the foregoing remarks the general question of infant baptism has been taken for granted. Our dispute has been with those who admit the principle, and differ from us only in the extent of its application. We have now to assert and vindicate the principle itself. Baptism, we have said, while pertaining to a certain class of adults, includes "little children" also. This is the doctrine we shall endeavour briefly to establish; and as our design is rather to confirm a friendly than unsettle an adverse faith, the proof shall be given, as much as possible, without the minuteness of detail or the tediousness of controversy. The objection to infant baptism is twofold. It alleges that reason calmly exercised condemns it, and that the word of God correctly expounded gives it no countenance. The argument therefore must, if not formally yet really, have a twofold aspect. Looking at both elements of the objection it must affirm that the doc-

trine is neither irrational nor unscriptural,—that, on the contrary, it can plead alike the suffrages of reason and the authority of revelation. One or two considerations founded on the nature of the rite itself will fitly take precedence of others.

1. Baptism is a service of religious consecration. It is not only a mute utterance of truth, or a visible symbol of grace. It *does* something, as well as *signifies* something—is an act as well as a sign—conducts a process as well as declares a principle. It is the claim of Christianity visibly asserted, the blessing of Christianity ostensibly sought, the obligations of Christianity implicitly assumed. In its administration Christianity puts forth a claim and consecrates to a service. It comes into outward connexion with the individual and formally dedicates him to itself, by a visible sign lays its hand of benediction upon him as the child of its nurture and love, and with an authority softened into benignity seems to say: “I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.” Considered in this light, there appears nothing unreasonable or improper, but something beautifully consistent and appropriate,—nothing that shocks an intelligent faith, but much that falls in with a simple piety,—in its application to even those of most tender age.

That children should be given to the Lord will hardly be doubted by any one. They are a heritage from Jehovah, and should be held in trust for him. That they should be offered to him publicly, in some religious observance, as those who are born into various human relations, and belong by a gracious arrangement to the Christian commonwealth, appears in the highest degree fitting and just. Such a service is almost a natural suggestion of the parental instinct purified by Divine grace to a religious affection. It is *certain, the love of a parent, spiritualized by his piety, finds*

a peculiar gratification in being allowed to say of his child, as Hannah of Samuel: "I will bring him, that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide for ever."* Jesus himself, who sanctified the infancy as well as the manhood of our nature, and became an example to every age, was presented as an infant to the Lord in the temple. During his public ministry, when giving instruction for the doctrine, and rules and precedents for the discipline, of his kingdom, he not only permitted but virtually commanded little children to be brought to him, that he might openly associate them with himself, and specially honour them with his blessing. He must also, in the beautiful parable in which he speaks of himself as a Shepherd, have intended to assign them a place in his fold. Their exclusion is wholly incompatible with a just conception of his language. They are the lambs for which, equally with the sheep, he has laid down his life, and are therefore to be gathered with his flock. To separate the two would be as little consistent with nature as with the completeness of the figurative representation. If really lambs there is an obvious propriety

* Even Mr. Knibb sees nothing to condemn, but something to approve, in a service of this kind. What is more remarkable, he applies to it the name of a *christening*. In a letter from Kingston, Jamaica, he writes: "It is customary here to name the children of the members, and I think that it is a practice likely to be productive of good effects. I have had one or two of these christenings, and enjoyed them, though I wished that I could enter more fully into the feelings of the parents. The parents bring the child into the chapel after service, and the minister takes it in his arms and names it. On returning it to the mother, he delivers a short address on the importance of training up children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, and prays for a blessing at the close." Mr. Hinton, his biographer, thinks this practice "to possess too much of the *animus* and resemblance of infant baptism to be capable of being wisely or even safely employed." *Life*, p. 47. The one, perhaps, looked at the thing from a purely religious, the other from a more strictly doctrinal position.

in their being with the sheep, entering by the same door into the same fold, and living under the benign and watchful superintendence of the same good Shepherd.

That Christianity demands this consecration of childhood, as a right inherent in its character or included in its mission, will scarcely admit of question. It is as the embodied power and love of God, and it comes to man in the plenitude of his sovereign authority. Its claim to the individual is not limited to a particular age, but extends over the whole period of his history,—commences with his earliest years, and reaches onward to his latest breath. Man does not come into being perfectly isolated, in a state of pure and absolute individualism ; he enters upon various relations, and becomes connected with pre-existing economies. An established arrangement anticipates his birth, and agencies to be hereafter exerted, happily or otherwise, gather round his cradle. Inseparable from the condition into which he is born are good and evil, and attendant upon it are a blessing and a curse. Sin has entered into the world, and the Gospel, its corrective and its cure, has entered also. The two are commensurate in their reach, as they are antagonistic in their natures : the mischief is measured by the grace, and the blessing is designed to obliterate the curse. With both man has an intimate connexion, and of both he comes into possession when he comes into existence. He is alike related to the first and to the second Adam, and he inherits equally from each. By the one judgment has come upon him to condemnation ; by the other the free gift has come upon him to justification of life. The condemnation attaches to him as fallen, the free gift has respect to him as redeemed ; the one belongs to him naturally, the other by a gracious appointment ; *the former he brings with him, the latter is prepared for*

him. Sin is inevitable to him; he is conceived and shapen in it. The evil thing and bitter—as a germinal principle, a disturbing element, a polluting taint, a blinding and warping tendency—inheres in his very constitution, and originates with his life. But if born in sin, he is also born into grace. The Gospel, as the commensurate remedy and the countervailing good, as the catholicon for the race and the specific for the individual, meets him at his coming into the world, and brings him, before he can understand their value, the message and the means of salvation. Stretching itself over the whole extent of his necessity, it commences with its blessing where sin begins with its curse. It opposes and prevails against the evil at its very origin, and by taking away its penalty delivers him from its power. It impresses him with the seal of its benediction from the beginning, and surrounds him with the atmosphere of its love from his first breath. It thus appropriates him to itself. Giving him life it demands his service; redeeming his soul it claims him as a rightful purchase. It assigns him, as one to be trained by its discipline, a place in the kingdom of God's dear Son, and virtually says to those intrusted with his nurture: "Take this child, and nurse it for me."

Obedience to this command is the true idea of Christian education; and this again is the practical recognition of the claim of the Gospel to the sanctification of childhood. It is first the acceptance *for* the child, and then the gradual transfer *to* him, of the obligations of religious service implied in the relationship into which he comes to "the covenants of promise." A Christian education is equally the right of the child and the demand of the Gospel; of the former because of his connexion with the Gospel as a

law of duty, of the latter because of its relation to the child as a provision of grace.

Education commences early and imperceptibly, before even the quick instinct of a mother can discern the process. At birth the faculties exist as a sort of undeveloped germ, or complex unity, which forms "the *root*, hidden under the soil, and away from the eye of consciousness, out of which the tree of spiritual life secretly germinates." This root grows while still below the surface, and takes in nutriment when its activity is little suspected. In its earliest exercises the mind is simply receptive, and during this stage, as indeed afterwards, it receives much, unconsciously alike to itself and its teacher, which re-appears in subsequent reflection, and becomes elementary to the future character. To the education thus early commenced almost everything contributes. Agencies abound as conditions vary. Instruction is given by words, looks, gestures, tones of voice, smiles, tears, prayers, a thousand circumstances of which the influence is as little dreamt of as the first quickening of infant intelligence is perceived. The soul, equally with the body, is surrounded with an atmosphere in which it lives, and moves, and has its being,—respires as naturally and freely as the senses drink in the light and air of heaven. As this atmosphere is genial or otherwise, as the elements it contains are pure or corrupt, the action it produces is beneficent or injurious, the element it supplies is a medicine or a poison—a diet to nourish or a drug to destroy. Now the command of the Old Testament, illustrated by such examples as that of Samuel, is, "Train up a child in the way he should go;" that of the New, with Timothy for exemplification, is, "Bring up your children in the *nurture* and admonition of the Lord." Already the Lord's by pur-

chase, they are to be offered to him in sacrifice ; included by him as members of his kingdom, they are to be nurtured for him as lambs of his fold ; receiving his blessing with their life, they are to be trained for his service from their birth. Though depraved, they are not to be treated as if the development of the original taint in habitual transgression was an inevitable necessity ; but rather in the faith, that Divine grace will be given so to excite and call forth the better instincts and tendencies of their nature, that the spirit will have gained an established ascendancy over the flesh almost before the conflict between them has fairly begun. It is a wrong theory from which to start in education, that conversion is to take place in after life, and must consist in a revolutionary change of the whole moral being ; that, in fact, the evil which is natural to man must be allowed to work its silent way into strength and mastery, and then be overcome by painful effort and bitter repentance.

The Gospel, we have seen, greets with benediction man's first coming into the world ; it receives him to the embrace of its mercy as soon as he becomes a living soul. His whole training therefore ought to be conducted with immediate reference to the condition in which it thus places him. He is not to grow up without culture, but to be *brought up in the nurture of the Lord*. The sorrow out of which tears are distilled is to be prevented, and the repentance which succeeds a life of irreligion to be rendered unnecessary. The conflict between " the lusts of the flesh " and " the law of the mind," so common to human experience, and so agonizing in a late conversion, is for the most part to be avoided by the education of the spiritual sensibilities to such decided supremacy over the carnal desires, that the love of Divine things, rooted in the very nature, and but little disturbed by the consciousness of rivalry and struggle, will

become a spontaneous and ever increasing delight. That such a result is possible, however seldom witnessed, can hardly be open to doubt. The infrequency of its occurrence is less attributable to the force of innate depravity, than to the ignorance which mistakes, or the indifference which neglects, the only appropriate means. If the vine is allowed to grow wild and neglected, with its early stem bent downwards, and with clasping tendrils to creep along the defiling soil, or to thread its mysterious way into a thick confusion of weed and brushwood, it will soon require a practised hand to disentangle it, and a violent effort to raise it to an upright position; but if the first tender shoot is taken and trained to climb upward by the skilful vinedresser, obedient to his touch, it will gradually rise into genial air and sunshine, twine its caressing branches round the shaft to which it clings for support, and in due season will reward the attention it receives with flowers of the sweetest fragrance, and fruit of the richest flavour. In like manner childhood, if left amid corrupting excitements to its own original instincts, will grow up into vices which will afterwards require for their correction a repentance of deep and, it may be, long continued severity; but if intelligent piety preside over its education from the beginning, its character will almost insensibly receive, in the mingled beauty of its several virtues, the impress of that wisdom which cometh from above; not because the education itself is sufficient for this, but because, as *the nurture of the Lord*, it is sure to attract to its aid the influence of his regenerating Spirit. "I doubt not to affirm," says Baxter, "that a godly education is God's first and ordinary appointed means, for the begetting of actual faith and other graces in the children of believers."*

* Christian Directory, 516.

Now in these several considerations we see, if not authority for infant baptism at least evidence of its propriety. So far no incongruity appears between the nature of the rite and the youth of the subject. What we have said of the condition of one is fitly represented in the office of the other. Congruity indeed belongs rather to condition than to age, and in every case where the just meaning of the rite can be expressed, there the reason for its application may be found. Baptism, we have stated, is a service of recognition and of consecration. It confesses a privilege, asserts a claim, and binds to a duty. In all these senses it is equally proper to children as to adults. It affirms their interest in the covenant of Divine mercy, especially that connexion with it which gives them a present redemption from the penal curse of sin. It acknowledges their right as lambs of the flock to a place in the Saviour's fold, and attests *his* claim, as involved in the right, to their exclusive dedication to his service. It also marks with visible solemnity the obligation of their parents to bring them up consistently with the evangelical position into which they come at birth, accepting as in their name alike its implied responsibilities and privileges, so that the relationship to Christ and his kingdom existing at the first, may not be afterwards disowned or dishonoured by habitual fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness. It thus gives form and outward expression to what is substantially the same without it. If for the reasons specified children should be presented to the Lord, baptism is the fitting mode of this duty. If they inherit certain privileges in Christ, on the ground of which they are entitled to Christian association, baptism is the appropriate recognition of such grace. If because of this Christian association they have a right to Christian nurture, baptism proclaims the right, and at the same time binds their parents in a

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voluntary pledge to furnish the necessary culture. As a service of religious consecration, therefore, baptism applies with the same general propriety to children as to adults.*

2. With equal propriety does it apply to them in its symbolical character. It is a sign as well as a service, a form of instruction as well as of consecration. By an outward ablution it is designed to teach the existence of inward defilement, and to set forth, with the need, the possibility of inward purification. All therefore, not *morally* disqualified, of whom these facts can be affirmed, may properly be admitted to receive it, as its observance in every such case is the expression of its true meaning as an emblematical assertion of Christian doctrine. But children are in this condition. Both facts pertain to them, and both may fitly be proclaimed. Though innocent of actual transgression, they are partakers of a sinful nature; if not defiled by voluntary iniquity, they are disordered by innate

* The following passage from Neander is worthy of especial study. It is founded on a quotation from Irenæus, who says of Christ: "He came to redeem all by Himself; all who through Him are born again unto God; infants, little children, young men and old," &c., &c. "The very idea of infant baptism," observes the historian, "implies that Christ, through the divine life which he imparted to and revealed in human nature, sanctified that nature from its earliest germ. The child born in a Christian family was to have this advantage, that he did not first come to Christianity out of heathenism or the natural life of sin, but from the first dawning of consciousness he should grow up under the imperceptible, preventing influences of a sanctifying, ennobling Christianity; that with the earliest dawn of the natural consciousness, a divine principle of life, capable of transforming nature, should be brought nigh to him, before the ungodly principle could come into full activity; so that the latter might at once find here more than a counterpoise. In such a case the new birth was not to constitute a new crisis, beginning at some definable moment, but it was to commence imperceptibly, and so to continue through the whole of life. Baptism, therefore, the visible sign of regeneration, was to be given *to the child at the very outset*; the child was to be consecrated to the Redeemer at the beginning of its life." Vol. 1, pp. 431, 432.—Bonn.

depravity. The remedy also is theirs equally with the disease. To them the "coming salvation" by Jesus Christ, and the "promise" of the Holy Spirit shed forth at the Pentecost, unquestionably belong. In the promise, indeed, they are included by a special reference, as their connexion with it is emphatically particularized by him to whom the keys of the kingdom of heaven were first and formally intrusted. They cannot therefore be deemed unsuitable subjects of the Christian ordinance. Some at least of the conditions of its administration meet in them, and these are such as exhibit the most perfect coincidence with its main design. If it be of the essence of a Sacrament to represent in symbolic language the fundamental truth of the Gospel, then, so far as baptism is significant of the two facts of existing depravity and possible sanctification, it must by a claim of unimpeachable propriety apply as well to children as to those of riper years.

3. But propriety rises to the force of an obligation when the ordinance is considered in its federal character. The command to baptize under the Gospel is but the transfer, with a change in the rite, of the command to circumcise under the Law. Circumcision, we have seen, was the seal of the *Abrahamic* covenant, and as such was affixed by Divine direction to every individual with whom in the person of its head the covenant was virtually made—that is, to Abraham, and his seed after him. Every child, from the first moment of its existence, was as truly comprehended in the covenant as every adult, and hence on the eighth day after its birth the seal was literally impressed, and the covenant formally ratified. A profession of faith in the covenant, and of consequent obligation to its engagements, was implied in the act, and, incapable of being made by the child, was representatively given by the parents. Every person, young or old,

receiving the rite, acquired the privilege of a recognised member of the Jewish commonwealth, and with the privilege the responsibility of one who is "a debtor to do the whole law."

Nothing of this, save what is purely circumstantial, "is done away in Christ." There is a difference in the form, but no abrogation of the principle. The Old economy lives in the New. The Gospel is substantially the same covenant of mercy under another dispensation, and Baptism, "the circumcision of Christ," is the new seal of it. None of the grace formerly given is lost. No privilege, of a spiritual nature, accorded] to the Jew is withheld from the Gentile. He who spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son. The same voice delivers the same truth, and is modulated by the same love; but the voice has a clearer tone and a more intelligible expression, the love a profounder depth and a vaster range. The world, and not a family, is now the audience. The covenant anciently made with *a people* has become the inheritance of *the race*. The wild olive is grafted into the good olive tree, and made to partake of its root and fatness. The middle wall of partition is broken down, and peace is proclaimed equally to those that were far off as to those that were nigh. The blessing of Abraham has come upon the Gentiles, and he is made the father of many nations. This extension of the covenant relation embraces every child that cometh into the world, as surely as the national and preliminary form of it included every child of Jewish parents. In the one case as in the other there is an undeniable interest in its promised blessings; there is consequently a corresponding claim to the application of that sign by which the interest is visibly attested. *No reason* for exclusion can now be given which did not

operate with equal force in the time of "the fathers:" and as no exclusion was specified or allowed to them, none, it is presumed, can be permitted to us. Unless, therefore, a Divine prohibition can be pleaded, the like parties are, within the limits of the respective constitutions, equally eligible for the like privilege. That is, children under the Gospel have the same rite to enter into the covenant by baptism, as the natural seed of Abraham had to enter into it by circumcision, and to forbid them is to incur the responsibility of an exception which, to say the least, there is no sufficient authority to justify. This leads to the further remark :

4. That had it been intended to exclude children from the initiatory ordinance, positive instruction to this effect would have been required by the Apostles and first teachers of Christianity. A sharply defined individualism was foreign to the conception and habit of the Jew. He was little accustomed to consider himself alone, either in position or privilege. A social economy of peculiar structure bound him inseparably to others, as part of a whole, and led him to connect, not to say identify, his own welfare with theirs. The names of *family*, *tribe*, and *people* had to him a special significance ; and each suggested relationships which rendered the idea of personal independence, whether of action or of interest, all but impossible. As a Jew he was the member of a commonwealth, and so much a part of it that he felt himself in a kind of organic connexion with it ; as a parent he was the centre of a circle, and so inclosed by it, yet united to it, that he seemed to live throughout its whole circumference. His children had only, as it were, a relative existence. They were included in him, as parts of himself ; partaking of his life, and inheriting his privileges. By a Divinely instituted arrangement, he carried their religious position in his own, as by

a law, founded in nature, but repeated with the solemn formality of a special promulgation, he accumulated for their future possession a patrimony of good or evil in the very character he became.

Now the Apostles were Jews, both in sentiment and habit. Taken from the midst of the people, they present no departure from the common type of their countrymen. They had no extraordinary force or striking originality of mind that would lead them, in the absence of Divine direction, and by irresistible impulses from within, to forsake "the old paths," and to strike out into "a more excellent way." Their education was strictly that of a Jew, pursued on the basis of the Old Testament, and limited to the scanty literature of their own nation. And their religious character, moulded to a national expression by the peculiar culture of their times, was eminently one of reverential attachment to established institute, and a tenacious adherence to the faith of their fathers. There was, consequently, no tendency in their ordinary conceptions of the individual to consider him in the light of a simple personality, and without reference to his domestic relationships. Clinging with the ardour of a first love to the traditions they had inherited, they were slow to surrender their convictions even to the demand of a special revelation. They would, therefore, never suspect, unless so instructed from above, that the unity of the family circle, so visible in their own social economy, was to be broken up by the severance in religious position of infant children from their parents. They had been taught—it was universally admitted—that children were holy to the Lord. The principle had come down to them from the days of the patriarchs, and every age had accumulated proofs in its favour. They themselves *were of the number*, as in infancy they had received the

sign of circumcision. The most common event of their life, so common indeed that a change in the custom would have startled and perplexed them, must have been to see the children of their people taken into the covenant by the application of the same sign. No obvious reason existed in the character of the New Dispensation, or in the transition to it from the old, for a departure from this custom, save in its purely accidental costume. They would therefore infer that no departure was intended, or rather, they would naturally presume this, without any thought of the contrary. The continuance of the covenant would be to them a sufficient ground for the continuance of the ordinance, and though the form of it was altered the principle would be held as substantially the same. Rooted in their theology and familiar to their experience, adapted to their social habit and gratifying to their instinctive desire, it would require the authority of an unquestionable revelation to dislodge it from their faith, and exclude it from their practice.

This is the more certain as baptism, the substitute of circumcision, was not unknown to them. It was only the adoption and higher designation of a ceremony already in existence. There were "divers baptisms" among the Jews, and one of these was an ablution with water, by which proselytes from heathenism were admitted to the profession and privileges of Judaism. The direct evidence for this is, it is true, derived chiefly from Jewish ecclesiastical literature. "In all ages," says Maimonides, who, writing in the eleventh century, may be taken as expressing the traditional faith of his countrymen, "when a Gentile desires to enter into the covenant, and gather himself under the wings of the majesty of God, and take upon him the yoke of the law, he must be circumcised, and baptized, and bring a sacrifice." This statement may possibly exceed the

truth in affirming that such has been the custom "in all ages," but that proselyte baptism was known in the early part of the third century, the Jewish Talmud sufficiently demonstrates. The text of the Talmud is called *Mishna*, the commentaries *Gemara*. Of these latter there are two, written at different periods within the seventh century; and from both Dr. Lightfoot and others have extracted the clearest testimonies in support of the existence at those times of the rite in question. The *Mishna* was composed by Rabbi Jehudah, about the year of our Lord 220, some say considerably earlier, and from it Professor Stuart gives the following quotation: "As to a proselyte, who becomes a proselyte on the evening of the passover, the followers of Shammai say, Let him be baptized, and let him eat the passover in the evening." Now the *Mishna* is not an original work, but a compilation, or, as the word means, a *Repetition*. It professes to embody the unwritten laws and usages of the past—to gather up the expiring voices of oral tradition, repeated with lessening distinctness from age to age, and to fix them in permanent forms of intelligible articulation. This also, in substance, is true of the *Gemara*, and together they form the reservoir into which the distributed waters of ecclesiastical antiquity have been collected. The mention of proselyte baptism as an existing observance in such a work, naturally implies for it an early origin; and if it be true, as Jewish tradition asserts, that Rabbi Shammai, to whose disciples the saying in the *Mishna* is referred, lived nearly half a century before the birth of Christ, the rite, it may fairly be presumed, was not unknown at the commencement of the Christian era. But if otherwise, the simple fact alone, that the observance is recognised as already established at the beginning of the third century, and, especially, that it is recognised among laws and maxims

which are professedly echoes of past ages,—some of them of utterances given in the time of Moses and Aaron,—is sufficient to claim for it a history reaching backward through a considerable period from the date of its first record.

The testimony of Jewish literature accords well with the facts of the New Testament; the presumption of antiquity created by one, is supported by the evidence of a prior existence contained in the other. This evidence appears in the obvious familiarity of the Jews with baptism, as an initiatory ceremony, at the commencement of John's ministry. Attracted by the fame of his character and teaching, they went out in immense multitudes to be baptized of him in Jordan. The rite was accepted as one well known. There was no reluctance to submit to it founded on its recent origin or doubtful authority. No surprise was expressed at its institution, and no information demanded of its meaning. But Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, sought and received it as an ordinance with which custom had made them perfectly familiar.

Corroborative evidence, of like kind, is supplied in the question proposed by the priests and Levites to John the Baptist: "Why baptizest thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet?"* The question does not refer to the nature of baptism, but to the right of John to administer it. The messengers of the Pharisees do not ask the Forerunner why he founded a new rite, and established a fresh form of religious profession, but knowing the design of baptism—its historical import, as the introduction of a new dispensation, or the initiation into a new faith,—they demand his authority to use it, if he be neither the expected prophet, nor the promised Messiah. If it be

* John i. 25.

said the question implies, that unless John were Christ, Elijah, or the prophet, he could have no right to baptize, and therefore that the observance could not have been in common use, the answer is, it implies only that he could have no right to baptize a Jew, as *such* a baptism was unknown, and could not be recognised except on the authority of a Messenger from heaven. The Pharisees knowing the meaning of the rite, were astonished that an individual, who was neither Elijah nor the Christ, should apply it to those who were already the children of Abraham.

The proof is still further strengthened by the appeal of our Lord to Nicodemus, when he professed himself unable to understand His discourse. He had said to him: "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The statement perplexed and confounded him, and he seeks relief from his difficulty by inquiring, "How can these things be?" The Saviour replies: "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?"—An answer which, if it does not necessarily imply, is best explained on the supposition, that baptism, the birth by water, must have been or ought to have been perfectly familiar to Nicodemus, as a master of Israel; and which, so understood, becomes extremely pertinent from the fact, that a convert from heathenism to Judaism was, when baptized, "reputed as an infant new born."

Now proselyte baptism, like circumcision, included the whole family. The law originally ordained for one was subsequently applied to the other. The Jewish mind knew nothing of separation in such cases. The head comprehended the members, the children came with their parents, and all were baptized together.* The Apostles had never been

* Lightfoot observes, that "the baptizing of infants had been a thing as *commonly known*, and as *commonly used*, before John's coming, and to

otherwise taught. They had never received any other principle, or witnessed any different practice. Their faith and experience both required that children should attend their parents, and that the same religious privilege should be accorded to each. Their knowledge of the past would determine their expectation of the future. In the absence of a special prohibition, they would naturally, and without the suspicion of error, perpetuate by the newly instituted observance the custom which, under Divine sanction, had come down to them from a remote antiquity. They would admit to the rite of Christian baptism, as parties included in the one "everlasting covenant," the same class of persons as in the previous economy had been recognised by the Jewish sign of circumcision. Not a vestige however of such a prohibition is to be found. One dispensation runs into the other, without any repeal of the ancient institute. Its outward form is authoritatively changed, and this suggests that a change in the law of its application would not have taken place without notice. Nothing that can be construed into such a notice appears, and hence we infer, not only that the Apostles must have administered the rite to children, but that their Master intended them to do so.

5. Their practice strikingly corroborates this conclusion. Of the several instances of Apostolical baptism recorded in the New Testament, three are of whole families. These are the Philippian jailor and his family, Lydia and her family, Stephanas and his family. The past is thus brought forward. No repeal of the law is indicated, either by precept or example. A Divine enactment is translated from a Jewish into a Christian observance. The Apostles retain their faith,

the very time of his coming, as any holy thing that was used among the Jews; and they were as well acquainted with infants' baptism, as they were with infants' circumcision."—*Wilson's Infant Baptism*, p. 209.

and perpetuate the custom of their nation. Circumcision went by households: baptism is made to follow the same rule. Children accompanied their parents from heathenism, and the whole family is admitted to Christian discipleship with its head.

There is nothing to shew, or even to suggest, that the above are exceptional cases. In all probability they are only examples of a common practice. They are not described as singular and insulated occurrences. They do not appear as remarkable instances of conversion, and union to the Church, of whole families. They seem rather to belong to a multitude of similar cases, illustrative of a well-understood principle. The particular mention of them is sufficiently accounted for by the peculiar circumstances attending them, or the special purpose they are made to serve. Two are associated with extraordinary events, the founding of the Philippian Church, and the miraculous deliverance of Paul and Silas; the third is used as an argument of reproof against the unseemly divisions of the Corinthian converts. "I baptized the household of Stephanas;" "When she and her household were baptized." The narrative is perfectly easy and natural. The term household is employed as one with which both writer and reader were quite familiar, and the baptism of the household is given as a circumstance that would excite no surprise and lead to no inquiry.

Nothing is said, even by the remotest implication, of the exclusion from the rite of any member of the baptized families, on the ground of age or religious disqualification. Children, whether old or young, attend their parent, and both are included in one service. No choice is preferred, no exception made. We are left to infer, nay obliged to *believe*, that the whole household was baptized.

That in none of the families there were children of tender years is a purely gratuitous assumption, and, all things considered, exceedingly improbable. "House," or "household," properly means not domestics but children—a man's offspring—and is usually employed to express these alone.* Applied to several families indiscriminately, without specification of either person or condition, it would naturally, according to our ordinary conceptions of its meaning, suggest all varieties of age, not only youth and maturity but childhood and infancy. And thus applied in connexion with baptism, it would virtually affirm, that the rite was administered to all whom the word in its received acceptation could be understood to include, and therefore to children as well as adults.

It adds to the probability that in the households in question some of the members were in early life, that scarcely anything is said of them beyond the bare fact of their baptism. They appear collectively in a social ordinance, but not distributively in a personal act. It is especially observable that nothing whatever is told of their conversion or even religious awakening. No intimation is given of that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation. There is no opening of the heart, as of Lydia; no extorted inquiry "What must I do to be saved?" as of the jailor; though this, and more than this, is recorded, with evident purpose and distinct particularity, of the head of the family. Of Lydia it is said, the Lord opened her heart, that she attended to the things spoken by Paul; and this statement, which refers exclusively to herself, is immediately followed by the announcement, that she and her household were baptized. It is true in the case of the

* Ruth iv. 12. Prov. xxxi. 15. 21. 1 Tim. iii. 4.

jailor, we are informed that "he rejoiced believing in God with all his house." But, while the mention of the faith occurs after that of the baptism, the structure of the passage is most correctly represented, when the joy and not the belief is predicated of the family. The words are, *καὶ ἡγαλλιάσατο πανοικὶ πεπίστευκῶς τῷ Θεῷ*, "and he, believing in God, rejoiced with all his house,"—a statement that would have been perfectly natural had little children been baptized, as no historian would have dreamed of excepting them in a general narrative of the domestic joy. But even with the common version the difficulty disappears on the admission, that children were embraced in the religious profession of their parents, as the peculiar connexion existing between them would give to the terms of religion a form so inclusive, that what, with literal exactness, could be truly said of only one, would, with conventional propriety, be familiarly applied to the other. So that, whatever the respective ages of the jailor's family,—though some of the members were of very tender youth,—it would have been quite consistent with that freedom of expression which had grown out of the prevailing habit of thought to say, "he rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."

For the particular mention of infants in these cases there appears to have been no necessity; nor would there have been much propriety in it. Their initiation into the Divine covenant was too much a matter of course to require a special reference; and their inclusion under one general term, *household*, was plainly more appropriate and natural than would have been a specification dividing the family according to the ages and conditions of its members. Indeed, the simple statement of a Jew that a whole family was baptized would, with his known experience of *circumcision* and *proselyte* baptism, be regarded as equivalent to

the declaration that infants were baptized, and by his own countrymen his language would be so interpreted.

It may be added, as a circumstance not perhaps weighty in itself, but as shewing the concurrence and harmony of a slight notice with more important considerations, that children are formally addressed in the epistles directed to the first churches, as those over whom the apostles had some kind of spiritual jurisdiction; which circumstance, as it implies a certain connexion with the church already existing, must further imply a *previous* recognition of membership by means of baptism. Agreeing with this is the incident, that when the conduct of those "men from Judea" who insisted on the circumcision of Gentile converts, came before the Apostles and Elders at Jerusalem, nothing was said against the subjects of the rite, though the demand must have been that infants as well as adults should be circumcised. While the particular ceremony was by a decision of the whole assembly declared no longer obligatory, the right of children to participate with their parents in some outward sign of fellowship, appears to have been silently preserved and virtually acknowledged. At least, the impropriety of associating both in the same emblematical service, and thus continuing under the New Dispensation the practice of the Old, seems neither to have been canvassed nor thought of.

6. The declaration of the Apostle, that the children of Christian parents are *holy*, is a further addition to our argument. Though not perhaps convincing in itself, it admirably falls in, as a part of the general consent of Scripture, with the preceding observations, and swells their accordant voices by a separate testimony of its own. Addressing himself to the scruples of some of the Corinthian converts, who, having unbelieving husbands or wives,

were in doubt whether they ought to continue to live with them, St. Paul observes: "If any brother hath an unbelieving wife, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. And the woman who hath an unbelieving husband, if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not dismiss him. For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: *else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.*"* The reason thus assigned for the continuance of the marriage relation is, that the separation of the Christian from the heathen parent on the ground of their difference of religious character, would involve as a consequence that their children were unclean. But this, says the Apostle, is not the case; they are, on the contrary, *holy*. He does not say that the children are made holy, as the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife, and the unbelieving wife by the believing husband, but simply that they are holy; and the fact is asserted as one generally understood and acknowledged. As it was wrong for Christians to marry heathens, the Corinthians supposed it was wrong, when married, to perpetuate the connexion. On this point therefore they required instruction, and the Apostle meets their difficulty by informing them, that the one party is sanctified by or to the other. But they had no need to be told that their children were holy, as this was universally admitted; and hence the difference of his language. He merely repeats the fact, though with an emphasis intended no doubt to give greater effect to the reasoning of the preceding clause,—that the divorce of the parents would proclaim as a consequence that the children were impure. This difference of language countenances, if it does not demand, a difference of construction. The

* 1 Cor. vii. 12, 13, 14.

only sense in which a heathen parent can be sanctified by or to a Christian, is one similar to that in which meat is said to be sanctified by the word of God and prayer; that is, fitted for use by Divine permission, and made a blessing through a devout spirit. He is sanctified to his wife in the simple fact of their marriage association; not as a man, but as a husband, not personally, but relatively to that mutual connexion by which they become one flesh. But of their children it is affirmed they are already holy, not *made* so, but *are* so. What meaning shall we affix to this statement?

Some reduce the holiness to the mere sense of legitimacy. "The sanctification referred to," says Dr. Carson, "must be legitimacy according to the law of God." And this interpretation is proposed by even Albert Barnes in his commentary on the place. The opinion is on every account inadmissible. There is nothing in the context to require or suggest it. The doubts of the Corinthians had no relation to their children, and in calling them holy the apostle states only what they appear before to have well understood. "*ἅγιος*, *holy*, never means legitimate, nor *ἀκαθάρτος*, *impure*, illegitimate. The words expressing these ideas are *γνήσιος* and *νόθος*, both of which are used by the Apostle figuratively, that is, in a spiritual application, and would doubtless, had there been need, have been employed by him in their literal construction.* It is the less likely that *holy* and *unholy* would be chosen to represent legitimate and illegitimate, as the terms were not of variable or uncertain import. A long and frequent use had consecrated them to a particular office,—had allied them to certain views of individual sanctity and its opposite,—and thus given them a fixed and definite meaning. But, in truth, the question is of easy determina-

* 1 Tim. 1, 2. Heb. xii. 8.

tion. It is not one of those cases in which the difficulty of the subject invites conjecture, or the scantiness of proof gives permission to doubt. The word rendered *holy* occurs in the Sacred volume more than seven hundred times, and in the New Testament considerably more than two hundred; so that the opportunities are ample for establishing the sense of legitimacy, if the term ever expresses that idea. We may confidently assert, however, that in no single instance will it bear this interpretation. No passage in which it occurs would convey a true meaning, a meaning which even our Baptist friends would accept as correctly declaring the mind of the Spirit, were it so interpreted; and hence it is perfectly arbitrary to attach to it a sense in one place which no other application of the word will illustrate or confirm.

Besides, were such a rendering proper to any other instance, it could hardly be accepted for the verse in question. Exceptional uses of terms do sometimes for convenience or ornament occur in a language, but the use of *ἅγιος* for legitimate, and *ἀκαθάρτος* for illegitimate, would be too unsuitable to the Apostle's design to be admitted in the case before us. His statement according to the common version is, that were Christian parents to separate from their heathen partners, merely because of their heathenism, their children would be unclean, but that in reality they are holy. This as it now stands is quite intelligible; any other reading would be encumbered with insuperable difficulties. How would separation involve illegitimacy, or the continuance of the marriage association the contrary? If the marriage were unlawful in itself, no living together of the parties could make the children legitimate; if lawful, no divorce could make them the children of fornication. But the validity of the Corinthian marriages was unimpeachable. They were contracted when both husband and wife were

heathens, and could not therefore be affected, whatever its meaning, by the injunction afterwards given, to marry "only in the Lord." If the marriage was valid the offspring were legitimate, and no separation of the parents could lower their claim, however it might lessen their privilege. For the term holy, then, we must seek some other interpretation.

Two senses are given in the Scriptures. Holiness is either real or ostensible, acquired virtue or religious consecration. In both cases it expresses the idea of separation from the world; but in one a separation of actual character, in the other of external relation. In the former application it is purity of heart, effected by Divine grace in co-operation with the individual will; in the latter it is designation to religious privilege and duty, arising solely out of providential arrangements, and, therefore, dependant on the good pleasure of God. According to this second meaning the Jews were called "holy to the Lord."* They regarded the Gentiles as "uncircumcised and unclean," the one because the other, but styled themselves,—so the Septuagint reads,—the "clean servants of God."† The whole nation was denominated "a holy people to the Lord their God,"‡ and in token of this purity every individual received in infancy the sign of circumcision.

It is only in a similar sense that the children of Christian parents can be accounted holy. Incapable of moral exercises, and without the consciousness of good or evil, their holiness is that of consecration rather than of character. By the merciful providence of God they are separated from the world, and in a certain sense associated with his people; at least, they are inclosed within the sphere of Christian privilege and obligation. "The Apostle is here

* Ezra viii. 28. † Neh. ii. 20. ‡ Deut. vii. 6.

treating," observes Neander, "of the sanctifying influence of the communion between parents and children, by which the children of Christian parents are distinguished from the children of those who are not Christian, and in virtue of which they may in a certain sense be termed *holy*, in contrast with the *unclean*." And though he denies the existence of infant baptism in the Apostolic age, he further admits, that "the point of view thus chosen by Paul" contains "the fundamental idea from which infant baptism was afterwards necessarily developed."* This fully accords with our doctrine, and is nearly all that we would make the passage say.—The holiness it attributes to children, then, involves the right to its acknowledgment. Religious consecration has its appointed sign, and the claim to it is established when the consecration is enjoyed. They who are set apart for the Lord are entitled to be formally presented to him. Distinguished by the qualifying sanctity, they cannot be excluded from the attesting rite. And as this rite is baptism, the children of Christian parents have as just a claim to be declared holy by its administration, as the children of Jewish parents had to be pronounced in a similar sense holy by the sign of circumcision.

7. The conduct of Jesus to little children adds a further consideration. To reprove his disciples for their unseemly desire of pre-eminence, "Jesus took a child, and set him near him, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great."† In Matthew's version there is the following: "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the

* History of the Planting and Training of the Chris. Church, p. 166.

† Luke ix. 47, 48.

kingdom of heaven."* By the plainest implication a child is here set forth as the type, in spirit and temper, of a Christian disciple. But this obviously suggests that he also is in a condition to be accounted a disciple. That which is essential to the discipleship of adults must, *a fortiori*, be sufficient for the discipleship of children: for it would hardly be consistent to affirm of an individual, that he represents in his own character the attributes which in another person are the necessary qualification for discipleship, and yet that he himself is not in a position to claim the same privilege. But this is not all. There is something still more decided in the language. The conclusion we have stated does not meet us at a distance; it lies in immediate connexion with the words themselves. It is not the last step of a logical series, but the first suggestion of a simple announcement. Our Lord identifies children with himself. He not only places them beside him, but virtually claims them as his own. While he honours them as exemplars to others, he also declares their oneness with himself; and the union is such that whosoever receiveth them in his name receiveth him likewise. What else can be meant by this, than what on several other occasions is meant by the same form of speech, when he testifies how intimately he and his people are one? "He that receiveth you receiveth me;" "Because ye have done it unto them, ye have done it unto me." The identification is manifestly that of intimate connexion with him as members of his kingdom. They are one with Christ—incorporated with him—in the sense in which the Church is called his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

This appears still more determinately from another passage. Certain individuals who, it may be, had them-

* Matt. xviii. 3.

selves become the disciples of Christ, were anxious to present their children to him. At least they esteemed him so highly, that they desired his benediction for their infant offspring. Accordingly they brought them to Jesus, that he might put his hands on them, and bless them. Some of the disciples, offended perhaps at the interruption thus occasioned to his discourse, and having but little of the spirit of their Master, rebuked the parents, and forbade them to bring their little ones. "But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them."* It is first to be observed, as a supplement to the preceding paragraph, that in this narrative such a relationship is supposed between a childlike spirit and the kingdom of God, as makes the possession of one the condition of entrance into the other. Wherever this spirit exists, then, the qualification for entrance must exist also; and as childhood furnishes the type, it is not improper to think that childhood is eligible for the privilege.

But, what is chiefly to be noted, little children are expressly declared to be "of the kingdom of God." This is true whether by the phrase, "the kingdom of God," is meant the Church on earth, or the Church in heaven, as the two are so connected that the one must precede the other. The kingdom of glory is but the succession in time and the perfection in character of the kingdom of grace. It is to "the whole family in heaven and earth" that little children belong. And their connexion with it is not a

* Mark x. 13-16.

matter of doubtful implication, but of direct and unequivocal statement, given by Him whose office it is to "gather the lambs in his arms, and to carry them in his bosom." That the children referred to in the narrative of the Evangelists were of tender age, is placed beyond doubt by the terms employed. In two of the versions they are described as very young children, and in the third, that of Luke, as *τὰ βρέφη*, infants. They were so young as to be carried to Jesus, and, when brought, to be taken up in his arms.

The declaration of our Lord respecting them applies to all of similar age and condition. It cannot be restricted to the particular children before him. They were representative of others, and his benediction was for the whole race of infants throughout all time. His words are not *of these*, but "*of such*,"—these furnishing the type and indicating the class,—"*of such* is the kingdom of God." That children are intended by the Saviour, and not older persons of childlike dispositions, there cannot be any reasonable question. If not, his words are without meaning and his argument without point, as their connexion with the kingdom of God is the very reason he assigns for permitting them to approach him, and the ground of his disapproval of the attempt of his disciples to prevent them. The fact that others of like character were subjects of his kingdom could be no reason for his receiving *them*, if their age disqualified them for incorporation with his people. Besides, the term rendered *such* commonly refers not, except inclusively, to those of similar character, but specifically to the individuals and objects previously mentioned. If preceded by the article, Mr. Godwin asserts, this is invariably its meaning. When the Jews cried out against Paul, "away with *such* a fellow from the earth," their malice had for its object not such a one as Paul, but Paul himself. When, speaking of the

rapture into Paradise of "a man in Christ," the Apostle states, "I knew *such* a one caught up to the third heaven," the allusion is not to some other of like character, but to the very individual named. When, commending Epaphroditus to the Philippians, he says, "receive him in the Lord, and hold *such* in reputation," he means not another resembling him, but the particular person, "his companion in labour and their messenger," just specified. When, after the analysis of Christian holiness into its several elements as the fruit of the Spirit, he declares, "against *such* there is no law," his statement is designed to include not such like virtues only, but those enumerated in the preceding passage. And when our Lord says, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of *such* is the kingdom of God," he means not men of childlike temper, but the very children themselves.

Infants then belong to Christ, and are properly subjects of his kingdom. Associated with a particular Christian society they may not be, as such association is really an act of individual election; but they are indisputably connected as members with the great Christian commonwealth. The King himself—their "Prince and Saviour"—acknowledges and claims them. To those who would imitate the conduct of his disciples and forbid them to come unto him, he rebukingly says: "Suffer, and forbid them not;" and to every one that would question their right or abridge their privilege, he addresses in mingled tones of caution and menace the warning: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones."

Shall we then oppose the wish of the Son of God? Shall we dispute his authority, and slight his words? If he claims our children shall we refuse them? If to them pertain the *adoption*, the covenants, and the promises, shall not their

inheritance in Christ be openly and solemnly ratified? If to them, by the special announcement of the Saviour himself, the kingdom of God belongs, shall the *fact* be asserted, and the *sign* which recognises and attests it be withheld? Shall the benediction of Jesus be virtually given, and the visible acknowledgment of the gift be denied? Is not this to disown whom Christ has received, by refusing the recognition which he has ordained? Is it not, consequently, to "forbid" and "despise" his little ones? True they have not faith; true also they do not need it. Their interest in the Christian covenant is irrespective of personal acts, because of such acts they are naturally incapable. It is as little children the Redeemer regards them, has purchased them with his blood, and is satisfied with them as the fruit of his travail. It is as little children he invites them to his presence, and pronounces them members of his kingdom. Nothing therefore unsuitable to this character can be required of them, and their inability to do that which is possible only to those of more advanced age, can be no reason for refusing to acknowledge them as in rightful possession of the privilege which pertains to their own age. Of this acknowledgment baptism is the specially instituted mode, and no authority can be pleaded for its denial to any accredited subjects of the Saviour's kingdom. Infant children are of this number. They are distinctly claimed as such by Christ himself, and hence to them, as standing in this relation, the ordinance unquestionably belongs. It confesses by sign what already exists in fact, and thus becomes as the signature of the Divine hand attesting the truth of the Divine word.

8. Our position is fortified by the terms of our Lord's commission: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son,

and of the Holy Ghost; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you."* The proper antecedent to the word *them* is *all nations*. No other, without a violation of grammatical consistency, can be offered in its stead. Imagination may supply one, but the passage will not acknowledge it. The two terms are co-extensive, *αὐτοὺς* *them*, having the same range as *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* *all the nations*. A principle of limitation has sometimes been sought in their difference of gender. Because *ἔθνη* is neuter and *αὐτοὺς* masculine, it has been alleged that the latter was intended to have a much more limited application than the former, including only such individuals of all the nations as were able to receive instruction, and had actually believed in Christ. As well might it be said that, because the word rendered *them* has a masculine form, none but males were to be baptized. The statement has no foundation in the syntax or usages of the language. The rule rather is, that when the object designated by a neuter noun is not itself neuter, the adjective or pronoun connected with it may be of a different gender, agreeing not with the grammatical termination of the noun, but with the natural character of the object. "This," says Winer, in his grammar on the New Testament, "takes place uniformly when the neuter noun denotes things which have life." And, among other examples, he cites one from Rom. ii. 14, "in which this very neuter noun for nations occurs in a similar connexion with a masculine pronoun—*ἔθνη . . . οὗτοι*."† The truth is, as Dr. Halley observes, that *ἔθνος* though neuter in termination is masculine in sense, and may be followed by pronouns "in the masculine with quite as much propriety as in the neuter, agreeing with what

* Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. † Biblical Review. Vol. ii. p. 15.

grammarians call the natural gender."* Whatever extent of reference, then, is given to the noun must also be given to the pronoun, so that *them* has precisely the same breadth of application as *all the nations*.

But if in this general sense *all the nations* is the antecedent of *them*, the subjects of baptism must, with only such limitation as is required by the previous terms of the command, embrace all that the phrase comprehensively expresses. This limitation cannot by any fair criticism be narrowed to the exclusion of little ones, such as Jesus would lay his hand upon, and pronounce of the kingdom of God. For though such may not be competent to receive instruction in the principles of Christianity, they may, as the fruit of the Saviour's death, be in a condition to be associated with his people by a visible acknowledgment of membership with his Church. If they cannot be regarded as proper subjects of the verb *to teach*, they may be brought within the operation of the verb *to disciple*. And this is the only kind of operation specified in that part of the commission under notice. "To disciple" is the true meaning of the word translated in the common version "to teach." "Go," says our Lord, and, μαθητεύσατε, disciple all the nations, baptizing them." The direction to teach is given subsequently to this injunction, and by a verb which expresses the exact idea. The repetition of it was clearly unnecessary, and is hardly to be supposed in a commission containing so few particulars, and intended to guide the Apostles in the order and kind of service required of them as the earliest preachers of the Gospel. Their first duty was to make disciples; and, when made, their second was to give them the fullest instruction in the knowledge of Christ. They were to gather out of the world and separate to the service of God individuals

* Reply to Stovel, p. 37.

in every place, and then they were to "teach them all things whatsoever the Saviour had commanded them." The disciples were to be made by baptism, not made and *then* baptized. The command is not twofold but simple,—enjoining a single duty, with the mode to be observed in its performance. It is not "disciple *and* baptize," but "disciple, baptizing,"—the participle specifying the manner in which the thing prescribed is to be accomplished.

Now, according to this view of the commission, a qualification for discipleship is a sufficient reason for baptism. Where the one exists the other cannot be forbidden. But little children possess this qualification. Included under the term "all the nations," they may be constituted disciples by means of the appointed rite. Discipleship has no particular relation to age. As little does it refer to any measured proficiency in any department of human culture. It does not necessarily imply knowledge, nor does knowledge imply it. Even as ordinarily used the term has great latitude, embracing those who from long training are thoroughly skilled in the doctrine of their master, and those who have only just been placed under his care. But its scholastic use imperfectly illustrates its religious application. In a scriptural sense it may be considered, in its simplest idea, as separation from the world by a formal incorporation with the people of God, with a view to future instruction and discipline. When the Pharisees said to the blind man whose eyes Jesus had opened, "We are Moses' disciples," they spoke not individually of themselves but generally of the whole nation, old and young, intending by this to reproach the man for alienating himself from the common faith of the people. In the discussion at Jerusalem raised by the demand of certain Jewish Christians, that Gentile converts should be circumcised and

required to keep the law of Moses, *disciple* is so employed as plainly to include infants. The demand was : " Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved." This " manner," of course, embraced the circumcision of themselves, and also of their infant offspring. Now Peter denounced the whole procedure, and described it as the " putting a yoke upon the neck of the *disciples*, which," said he, " neither our fathers nor we were able to bear." If the circumcision was that of Moses, it was the circumcision of infants as well as adults ; and if the demand for this rite was the imposition of a yoke upon the neck of the *disciples*, their infants equally with their parents were comprehended in this title. As a corroborative circumstance it may be added, that the Apostle who declared of Timothy that from a child, ἀπὸ βρέφους, *from an infant*, he had known the Holy Scriptures, would have been conscious of no impropriety in saying that from a child he had been a disciple of Moses, or of the Prophet like unto Moses.

The Jewish idea of discipleship thus differs widely from that of the schools. Grounded in a peculiar religious constitution, it has reference to a peculiar religious position. It expresses not the condition of one who is placed under a master for immediate training in some branch of learning, but that of an individual born within a certain economy of grace, and recognised as in rightful possession of its privileges by some instituted sign. To this the Christian idea is closely assimilated. According to the instruction of our Lord, discipleship under the Gospel is separation from the world and ostensible connexion with his Church, by the administration of an appointed rite. For this little children are unquestionably competent. Nay, it belongs to them as a purchased and inalienable privilege. For not only does the

free gift which has come upon all men to justification of life avail, in the absence of personal consciousness and voluntary action, to their salvation, but the Redeemer, as if foreseeing the tendency to despise them, singles them out for a special benediction, and places their right of association with his people beyond dispute by claiming them as members of his kingdom. Who then can forbid water that these should not be baptized? Taken from the beginning into covenant with God, and not excepted in the commission to his apostles by which Christ formally initiated a new dispensation of the covenant, they cannot justly be excluded from the service which attests their interest in its blessings. Comprehended under the words *all the nations*, they come within the command to *disciple*; and capable of discipleship, they must be entitled to baptism.

9. All these considerations are supported by the testimony of ecclesiastical antiquity. No period can be assigned to the commencement of infant baptism. If an innovation, some trace of its origin would surely be found in the history or traditions of the Church. The novelty must have excited inquiry, not to say resistance, and have registered itself, however imperfectly, in the controversies of the age. Nothing, however, of the kind appears. So that, on the theory of its introduction subsequently to the Apostles, we have this singular phenomenon :—An established ordinance, standing at the threshold of the Church, and by its outward character appealing to the senses of every individual member, undergoes, in respect to its subjects, a most remarkable and important change, and yet no record of the circumstance is preserved ! Beginning at a single place, or in several places at the same time, the change works its way outward, displaces the former practice, gradually steals *over the churches* in various countries, until, without oppo-

sition and without exception, it becomes universal. No surprise is expressed, no jealousy evoked ; no hostility is awakened, no strife enkindled,—at least, none of which the echoes or the annals have come down to our times. If any such existed, history has omitted to record them, and tradition has lost their memory. There is nothing either of narrative or of controversy to mark the origin of the change, or to shew the manner of its progress. A strong presumption this that no such change ever occurred, but that infant baptism has been alike the faith and practice of the Church from the beginning.

The notices of infant baptism in the writings of the early fathers are confessedly few. No polemical interest in the question had as yet been excited. The example of the Apostles had been quietly followed, and no opposition had arisen to throw the subject into special prominence. Such notices, however, as do appear are all, if we except that of Tertullian, in favour of the doctrine.* And even his reference to it is only the expression of an individual judgment against a commonly admitted practice ; so that it implies the existence of the very thing it condemns. While as a personal opinion it is opposed to infant baptism, as an historical testimony, it is strongly in favour of it. Tertullian recommends a delay of baptism in the case of little children, partly because theirs being an innocent age they had no need of baptismal grace, and partly because it was doubtful what their future character would be. Referring to the words of our Lord, "Suffer them to come to me," he says : "Let them come while they are growing up ; let them come when they learn whither they come ; let them be made Christians when they are able to know Christ. What should hurry the age of innocence to the remission of

* Tertullian is supposed to have been born A.D. 160.

sins?" But for reasons of equal weight, *non minore de causa*, he advises widows and those who have never been married to postpone their baptism, observing, "Whoever understands the importance of baptism will dread its reception more than its delay."*

These are very different grounds from those on which infant baptism is now assailed. They are such, in fact, as to make the testimony of this father, as an historical witness, virtually in favour of the question. Though from his disapproval of the practice he was concerned to level at it his choicest weapons, the strongest argument he brings against it, is one founded on the superstitious views he had taken of the efficacy of the rite. He does not speak of it as a new thing, or as opposed to the common faith of the churches. He does not allege against it apostolical tradition, or the words of Christ in the great commission. He simply, from his own unscriptural notions of its character, urges postponement in the case of young children, as preferable to immediate administration. His words are : "The delay of baptism is more useful, especially in respect to little children."† And even the value of this opinion, as that of a learned father, already small because of the view of the ordinance on which it is founded, is further lessened by the circumstance, that he advises the same delay in the case of widowed and unmarried persons. So that Tertulian, though personally opposed to infant baptism, is really a witness giving unimpeachable testimony to its prevalence in his own age; while at the same time, the grounds on which his judgment is based are such as to deprive him of all weight as an authority in support of modern opposition to the rite.

* De Baptismo, c. 18.

† *Cunctatio baptismi utilior est, præcipue tamen circa parvulos. Do.*

But still earlier notices than that of Tertullian exist. Irenæus, who was born in the early part of the second century, speaks of infants and little children, *infantes et parvulos*, as *regenerated* to the Lord; by which he undoubtedly refers to their baptism.* “In the mind of Irenæus,” says Neander, “regeneration and baptism are intimately connected; and it is difficult to conceive how the term “being born again” can be employed, with respect to this age, to denote anything else than baptism.”† Justin Martyr, who was born still earlier, and whose first apology appeared somewhere about the middle of the second century, speaks of numbers of men and women sixty and seventy years old, who, *ἐκ παιδῶν ἐμαθητεύθησαν τῷ χριστῷ* from childhood were discipled to Christ. As discipleship was by baptism, the conclusion is, that these were, if not in infancy yet at a very early period, and therefore within the age of the Apostles, admitted to the Christian ordinance. Origen,—who flourished later, but who, born at Alexandria of Christian parents, and possessing a naturally powerful and inquisitive mind, well skilled in ancient and modern Greek literature, and early promoted by his various gifts and attainments to the office of Catechist in his native city, enjoyed peculiar facilities for ascertaining the truth on this question,—gives repeated testimonies to the existence and antiquity of infant baptism, declaring in one place that “the church has received from the Apostles the tradition that baptisms should be given to infants.”‡ The prevalence of infant baptism in the North African Church, about the middle of the third century, is attested by the dispute which arose, conducted principally

* Omnes enim per semetipsum venit salvare: omnes, inquam, qui per eum renascuntur in Deum, infantes et parvulos et pueros et juvenes et seniores. L. ii. c. 22. § 4.

† Church History, Vol. I. p. 431. ‡ Com. in Ep. ad. Rom. L. v. c. 9.

by Fidus and Cyprian, respecting the time when the rite should be administered, whether, following the analogy of circumcision, when the child was eight days old, or immediately after its birth. "In the Persian church likewise," says Neander, "infant baptism was, in the course of the third century, so generally recognised, that the heretic Mani thought he could draw an argument from it in favour of a doctrine which seemed to him necessarily pre-supposed by this application of the rite."* In short, the assertion so often made may here be repeated,—the more confidently as no refutation of it has yet been given,—that for the first ten centuries of the Christian era infant baptism was the common practice of the Church; that in every case of adult baptism the subject was, when born, the offspring of heathens or of Jews; and that not a single instance is recorded of an individual, whose parents were professedly Christian at his birth, receiving baptism in mature life, or failing to receive it while he was yet a child.

The argument is thus cumulative, sustaining the conclusion by evidence from every aspect in which the question can fairly be viewed. Various considerations unite in the same result, each having an independent propriety and force, and all presenting that harmonious coincidence of fact and statement which, on most kindred subjects, is deemed sufficient to merit if not to win conviction. Had only one witness been available, hesitation might have arrested our judgment, and doubt have ultimately led to denial; but many witnesses come forth to the inquiry, and, by separate testimonies in mutual agreement, so strengthen the proof as to demand for the doctrine they support a "full assurance of faith."

To the objection founded on the supposed inutility of

* Church History, 435.

the baptism of infants, the reply may conveniently be deferred until the advantages of the ordinance are generally considered. With respect to the difficulty sometimes felt from the want of more explicit and frequent references to the subject in the New Testament, it may suffice to observe that in the estimation of the Apostles, external rites were comparatively of such inferior importance that their allusions to them are extremely rare, and in several cases only incidental; that once established these services would have little need, except in cases of departure from their original simplicity, to be afterwards vindicated or expounded, as, appealing continually to the senses, their observance would be a perpetual setting forth of their distinctive character; that some other doctrines, as the Divine authority of the Lord's day, rest on evidence not more direct, but much less abundant and decisive, than that which gives certainty to the claim of children to receive the initiatory rite; that the baptism of infants, falling in, as it did, with the prevailing sentiments and customs of the Jews, would be too much a matter of course to call for repeated or even special mention; and, finally, that, accustomed to follow their parents, as included in the same profession of faith, children were sufficiently discriminated under the ordinary designation of *house* or *household*.

CHAPTER IV.

BAPTISM : ITS MODE.

The mode of Baptism includes two things, a form of words and the use of water. In relation to the first, concerning which no difference of opinion exists, a single observation will be sufficient.

No particular form of words is prescribed by Jesus Christ, or given in the instances of Apostolic baptism recorded in the New Testament; but the substance of one, without which no baptismal service could plead the sanction of Divine authority, is contained in the terms of the great commission. There is a positive command to baptize, *eis*, into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and obedience to this command seems possible only as the three distinctions of the unsearchable Essence are severally pronounced. To be baptized into the name of any one is to be devoted to him, by some appropriate ceremony, as a religious teacher and guide. This may not exhaust the whole contents of the expression; but it suggests the general idea. The Israelites were thus "baptized unto Moses;" and in the same sense the Apostle demands of the Corinthians, "Were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" To be baptized into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, then, is to be consecrated to the sacred Trinity in their essential oneness and distinctive *personality*,—to be visibly set apart to each, though not as

separate from the other, in that particular relation which he occupies in the work of human redemption.

With respect to the second characteristic of the mode the same brevity cannot be observed, and yet a general view of the subject may be compressed within comparatively narrow limits. The question is not whether water shall be used at all, for this, though not specified in the words of Jesus Christ, nor necessarily implied in the term baptize, is taken for granted; the question rather is, after what manner shall it be used. One class of Christians contends that dipping, the immersion of the whole person, is required; another, and a much larger, asserts, that the application of water by pouring or sprinkling is, at least, equally valid with immersion. This, the common though not universal judgment of the Church, is the position we shall endeavour briefly to establish.

Now it must not be overlooked that the whole question at issue is one of form and not of substance, of ceremony and not of truth. The difference existing upon it does not, as we believe, in the least affect the nature of the institution itself, or the design of its observance. It does not involve the enjoyment or forfeiture of a single spiritual blessing, the belief or rejection of any one doctrine to which the term evangelical or saving can fairly be applied. It must therefore be a question of very subordinate interest, and cannot by any possibility be exaggerated to the importance with which the prejudices of education, or the animosities of controversy, have invested it. The obedience of faith,—that faith in which a man is fully persuaded in his own mind,—is the great requirement of the Gospel, and this cannot suffer very seriously from a trifling difference in the mode, when the spirit of the service is essentially preserved.

Our first remark, then, is a plea for liberty. We claim the

right of election in the manner of administering baptism, without incurring the charge of mistaking its character, or departing from its intention. Our whole argument, indeed, aspires to little more than this, as we have no wish to vindicate the exclusive authority of any specific mode. But the present plea is general rather than particular, founded not on any criticism designed to give a preference to one mode over another, but on that broad view of the ordinance itself which sees the same principle reflected in several varieties of form.

The Gospel is the perfect law of liberty, and this liberty has a certain reference to ceremony as well as to sin. Intended not for an age or a people, nor as a means of training for higher revelations of Divine truth, but for man universally and in the most advanced condition of his nature, it is singularly free from carnal ordinances, and especially from forms of service of which the tendency is to materialize the conception, or to seduce into a habit of mechanical obedience. While it strips from the eye the covering anciently hung before it, and allows the glory of the Lord to be seen with open face, it also merges the outward characteristic of mere observance into the "spirit and truth" of essential duty. Placing the kingdom of God within, it resolves it solely into righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. If it does not abolish the ceremonial element altogether, it ordains it without any minuteness of instruction, and reduces its value to the simple measure of its utility as a help to human infirmity. The form of the service, therefore, is naturally sunk in the substance, the mode gives way to the meaning, and each becomes of little consideration providing the spirit of the rite is preserved, and the good intended by it enjoyed.

Now baptism is simply and only a positive institution,

originating in the will of God, and dependant for its continuance on his good pleasure. It contains in itself no moral quality which serves as a ground of individual obligation, and supplies from its own essence no standard which determines the right or wrong of human conduct, in its observance or neglect. It is inconceivable therefore that, as a *Christian* ordinance, the mode of its observance should have been fixed with such nicely delineated precision, as to render inexcusable the least departure from a rigid and inflexible uniformity, or invested with an importance so weighty, as to admit of no variation in the mere circumstance of applying water, without such injury to the character as to destroy the validity of the entire service. This would be not only to imprison the spirit in the letter, but to confine it absolutely to a single manner of expression. Positive institutions, having no moral nature of their own, derive all their value from the substantial verity which underlies their surface, and becomes articulate and visible in their symbolic forms. Hence the essence of their observance lies not in the minuteness of invariable ceremony, but in a broad and practical recognition of their true design and meaning. The kingdom of God is not in word, but in power; and, consistently with this, the accident of a rite may surely be varied, if the principle is faithfully preserved. At least, in the absence of specific instruction to the contrary, all that can be urged as imperative, under a constitution so eminently free as the Gospel, is a mode of action which, while it fitly represents the truth to be exhibited, expresses with equal distinctness the spirit of devout and reverential submission to the Divine command. Viewed in relation to baptism, the observance thus required is not restricted to any particular form, but involves conditions which may be fulfilled as well by affusion as immersion,

and by sprinkling as either. That is, baptism is not a ceremony of which the essence consists in mode, but a sacrament of which mode is subordinate to the essence.

In the administration of the Lord's Supper the principle of these remarks is virtually conceded. A rigid conformity to all the circumstances of its institution is neither demanded nor observed. One at least of these is practically disregarded, and no departure from the true nature of the service is acknowledged or suspected. The ordinance was instituted by the Saviour at *night*, "the night in which he was betrayed." This circumstance naturally connects its celebration with the same period of time, and an exposition of the sacred record inexorably literal, would make the selection of that time a part of the general obligation. Instituted at night, the ordinance is denominated in Scripture "*the Lord's Supper*." The hour consecrated to its origin is proclaimed and commemorated in its very name, as if to fix beyond a doubt the exact period for its observance. That such is the meaning of *δεῖπνον* will not, as it cannot, be disputed. "The Heroes of Homer," says Dr. Halley, "partook of their *δεῖπνον* in the morning, and their successors seem to have made it their dinner; but long before the Apostolic age, it had become regularly and constantly the evening meal." This is the *δεῖπνον* of the New Testament, sometimes rendered feast, and sometimes supper; and this also is the *δεῖπνον* of our Lord, the *Supper* established by Him as "the communion of His body and blood." The word is significant of a fact, and is chosen considerably, as agreeing with the narrative which informs us, "when the *even* was come, Jesus sat down with the twelve." Now, in the presence of instruction so minute and definite, it would be quite as easy to *maintain* that time enters into a Scriptural participation

of the Lord's Supper, as that mode belongs inseparably and essentially to baptism. Nay still more so, as the former is specified with a distinctness and precision to which the latter can make no pretension. Mode *may* possibly be implied in baptism, but time *must* be included in supper. Whatever freedom, therefore, in the choice of that which is outward and in its own nature variable, is demanded for the celebration of one ordinance, must, for precisely similar reasons, be permitted to the observance of the other. And hence, if communion at the Lord's table in the morning or at mid-day is, as we readily concede, a sacramental partaking of the Lord's Supper, the admission of an individual into the kingdom of God by other modes than immersion, is a veritable administration of Christian baptism.

In these observations is contained a defence of baptism by sprinkling, of which no answer can be deemed a sufficient refutation, short of a proof from the word of God, that immersion is set forth with such distinctness, and enjoined with such authority, as to be the only mode in which the rite can truly³ and acceptably be administered. No such proof however can be adduced. The great requirement of baptism, as to its form, appears to be the use of water, as the emblem of spiritual influence, in the initiation of a person into the household of faith, according to the formula prescribed by Jesus Christ in the terms of his commission. It is not the quantity of water used, nor the manner of its application, as these are too nearly allied to questions of meat and drink to be of much importance among the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. The Spirit of truth has given them no prominence in the revelation of his mind. He has in fact furnished no direction so minute and definite as to have the force of law, restricting the Church to one invariable mode, and making its

adoption indispensable to the validity of the rite. It is not dipping into water, much less dipping into the Trinity, that he has commanded, but baptism into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost ; and no other word, certainly none expressive of mode, could with any propriety be substituted for the one he has employed. He has thus in effect separated the form from the substance, and invested the ordinance with a value independent of its particular ceremony. If he has not directly taught, he has plainly suggested, that the manner of applying water to the subject is only of subordinate consideration, and may be varied to a difference of opinion without injuriously affecting the nature of the service ; and, consequently, that sprinkling, if unsupported by any other argument, may at least plead a permission which makes it of equal authority with immersion.

And yet this, though true, is far from expressing the whole truth, and satisfying the full demands of the case. Sprinkling is not abandoned to the expedient of logic, and does not require for its justification the plea of a general licence. Though in the word of God there is the absence of that precise and formal instruction which gives exclusive importance to one particular mode of baptism, there is at the same time a variety of facts and testimonies which, when fairly estimated, are so little in favour of immersion as the only form of administering the service, that they present all the evidence which the New Testament is accustomed to offer, on questions of mere ritual, in support of pouring or sprinkling. The proof of this by its appropriate evidence,—a critical examination of the passages which relate to the subject,—would of itself require a volume. All that the limits of the present essay will allow is a classification under several heads of the more im-

portant branches of the argument, giving the result and indicating the process, rather than traversing by successive steps over the whole extent, of the inquiry.

1. The foundation of the argument is laid in the meaning of the verb to baptize. This, though capable of limitation, is, as we believe, broad enough to embrace the views of all denominations of Christians. The term is not specific, as to dip, or to sprinkle; but generic, as to cleanse, or to wash. As the requirement of the verb to wash may be met by more than one kind of ablution, so the sense of the verb to baptize may be realized by more than one form of observance. The word indeed seems to have been selected with admirable discrimination, as if to give the least possible encouragement to the tendency in our nature to exalt unduly the outward characteristics of religious truth and duty. It assigns exclusive authority to no particular mode of baptism, but leaves the choice to be determined by the varying circumstances of convenience and propriety. It takes, in fact, the ordinance out of the sphere of mere ritual by expressing the substance rather than the mode, the thing intended more than the manner to be adopted, and thus brings it into harmony with that view of the Gospel which considers it under an eminently spiritual aspect—"not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life."

The earliest and etymological signification of βαπτίζω cannot now perhaps be ascertained, as we know but little of the Greek language in its Pelasgian simplicity. Even if it could the result might be of small assistance, as in the progress of a language words acquire new inflections and a more extended application, which gradually modify and sometimes altogether change their primitive meaning. This is especially true of words taken from a secular and conse-

crated to a religious use, and still more so when, as in the case of the New Testament writers, the new application is made by those with whom the language is not the vernacular tongue. "No principle is more universally admitted by all sound philologists, than that to establish the original and primitive meaning of a word, is not at all decisive as it regards its subsequent usages. It often aids only as giving a clue by which we can trace the progress of the imagination, or the association of ideas, in leading the mind from meaning to meaning, on some ground of relation, similitude, or connexion of cause and effect. So the verb *to spring*, denotes an act, and gives rise to a noun denoting an act. A perception of similitude transfers the word to the issuing of water from a fountain, to the motion of a watch spring—to the bounding over a ditch—to the rousing of game—to the discharging of a mine—"and to the springing of plants in the spring of the year. Yet who does not feel that to be able to trace such a process of thought, is far from proving that, when a man in one case says, I made a *spring* over the ditch, in another, I broke the *spring* of my watch, in another, I drank from the *spring*, in another, I prefer *spring* to winter, he means in each case the same thing by the word *spring*? And who, in using these words, always resorts to the original idea of the verb? Indeed, so far is it from being true that this is commonly done, that most persons are pleased when the track of the mind is uncovered, and the path is pointed out by which it had passed from meaning to meaning, as if a new idea had been acquired."* So also of the verb *to wash*. Starting from the simple meaning of to cleanse with water, or with some other purifying element, it ramifies to the expression of almost every idea in which the least analogy to its

* Beecher on Baptism, p. 11.

original use can be traced. Not only does it with generic comprehension describe all the ordinary forms of purification, but it even loses in some instances the very sense of to purify, and in others dispenses with the service of a fluid altogether. Thus we say, the beach is washed by the sea, a wound is washed with a cooling liquid, a metal is washed with silver or gold. The same varieties appear in the noun, as *wash* is used for a dye, a lotion, a marsh, a feed for swine, and almost every kind of alluvial deposit.

Βάπτω itself, with which *βαπτίζω*, both in etymology and meaning, is closely allied, exhibits similar deflections from its primitive application. Its range of variation is more limited, but still decided and unquestionable. Originally and most frequently the word denotes to dip, to immerse; but from this it passes to the signification of to dye, to stain, without any reference to mode. This, though formally denied by the advocates of immersion, is now generally conceded. Two or three examples will serve for illustration. In *the Battle of the Frogs and Mice*, attributed to Homer, one of the champions, Crambophagus, fatally wounded by Lichenor, is described as dyeing the lake with his blood. The words are, *κάδδ' ἔπεισ' ἀνένευσεν ἐβάπτετο δ' ἄμματι λίμνη*—which Cowper thus renders,—

"So fell Crambophagus; and from that fall
Never arose, but reddening with his blood
The wave," &c.

"He dyed or coloured the lake with his blood," is the only rendering that is consistent with sound criticism and a correct taste. This is affirmed by even Dr. Carson himself, who pronounces the dipping by hyperbole of the lake in the blood of a frog, as Dr. Gale had previously read the passage, "a monstrous perversion of taste," and "a monstrous paradox in rhetoric."—Aristotle supplies the following instance:

θλιβομόνος δε βάπτει καὶ ἀνθίζει τὴν χεῖρα—"being pressed, it dyes and colours the hand."* *Dip* is obviously impossible here, as well because one verb suggests the meaning of the other,—the two being used synonymously,—as because the dying is effected not by the plunging of the hand into the colouring matter, but by the pressing of the colouring matter in the hand.—Hippocrates, speaking of a certain liquid, says: ἐπειδὴν ἐπιστάξῃ ἐπὶ τὰ ἱμάτια βάπτεται: "when it drops upon the garments they are dyed." Arrian also, in his history of Alexander's Expedition, informs us, that Nearchus relates of the Indians that, τοὺς πωγῶνας βάπτωνται, "they dye their beards." In the former case immersion is expressly excluded, in the latter it is wholly inconceivable.†—To these examples must be added one in which βάπτω can properly be understood neither in the sense of to dip nor to dye. In the Septuagint version of Daniel, or rather in that of Theodotion early substituted for it, the word is twice employed to describe the effect of the dew upon Nebuchadnezzar, when lying under the heavy judgment of God: καὶ ἀπὸ τῆς δρόσου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐβάφη: "His body was wet with the dew of heaven."‡ This, though the syntax of the passage is confessedly peculiar, seems the only translation which expresses the meaning intended. *To be immersed in the dew of heaven* would neither be suitable to the preposition with which the verb is construed,—

* Hist. Animal. Lib. v. c. 15.

† Herodotus and Josephus employ the word in the same sense of to dye, though not in a construction which necessarily forbids the idea of mode. The former says of the Sarangae: "They had, ἱμάτια βεβαμμένα, dyed or coloured garments." L. vii. 67. The latter, speaking of the contributions of the Jews to the tabernacle of Moses, says: "They brought camel's hair and skins of sheep, dyed some purple and some scarlet:" Καὶ τὰς μὲν ὑακινθῷ βεβαμμένας τὰς δὲ φοίνικι.—Ant. iii. 6.

‡ Dan. iv. 30. v. 21.

as *ἀπό* cannot well be represented by *in*; nor at all consistent with the conditions of the case,—as the dew was not a pool into which the fallen monarch was plunged, but a gentle shower with which his body was moistened. The sacred writer, and after him his Greek translator, had manifestly no regard to mode, but designed simply to express the thing.* These are but a few of many instances in which the verb in question, though originally meaning to dip, has not only acquired a secondary sense, but acquired it with the absolute loss of mode.

Now βαπτίζω is a derivative of βάπτω, and may possibly have an equal diversity of application. At least a diversity in the one encourages, by analogy, the expectation of a similar diversity in the other. What is the exact relation between the two words, and to what particular meaning the termination *ίζω* modifies the primitive root, cannot, on any received canon of etymology, be satisfactorily determined. Theories have varied as creeds have differed. A diminutive, intensive, continuative, frequentative, and causative force has each been claimed for the verbal adjunct; but, probably, the claim has mostly been suggested rather by the exigencies of a doctrine than by the necessities of the language. The diminutive was adopted to strengthen the argument in favour of sprinkling, on the principle that the derivative must denote less than the original term: for the very opposite reason the intensive was advocated. The frequentative had possibly its foundation in the triune immersion, answering to the threefold personality of the Godhead, which at one time prevailed in the Church; and the causative, which Dr. Halley has shewn

* Gesenius includes in the uses of the Chaldee verb *בָּטַח*, rendered by βάπτω, the senses of *to be wet*, *to be moistened*; and adds, "In Targ. often for *to dye*, *to tinge*."

to be a mere shifting of the sense from the active to the neuter,* is indebted for the patronage it receives from Dr. Carson to the service it is supposed to render to the cause of dipping. The truth is, no invariable or even general rule can be laid down. Each of the theories may be fortified by individual cases of illustration, but none of them covers the whole ground of the question, and claims on the plea of unexceptional usage the authority of a regulative principle. For this reason an analysis of particular examples is a much safer method of inquiry, than abstract reasoning founded on uncertain canons of philological criticism. Hence the meaning of the term is best sought in the few instances of its occurrence in the classic literature of ancient Greece.

Now these instances, it has often been shewn, are such as to verify the expectation that βαπτίζω is equally flexible in its action and diverse in its import with the root out of which it has grown. They certainly, whatever other service they render, give but little countenance to the assertion that the verb is purely one of mode, and still less to the statement, often made with a sovereign contempt of the opposite opinion, that immersion, or rather dipping, is the mode. In some passages, no doubt, the word has restrictively the meaning of to dip, but in others an accurate construction prohibits this particular action, and demands in preference the sense of submersion, overwhelming, superfusion, inclusion, &c. ; each of which represents an idea as foreign to that of dipping as to that of sprinkling. A drowned man and a sunken ship are said to be baptized. Josephus relates of Aristobulus that, "being baptized (submerged) by the Galatians in a bath, he died;" and, narrating the events of his own life, says: "Our ship having been baptized (*sunk*)

* Congregational Lect. p. 464.

in the middle of the Adriatic." Polybius also, describing a sea-fight, observes: "They dashed incessantly against them, and baptized (*sunk*) many of the boats." And again Dion Cassius, speaking of a storm at Rome, says: "The ships which were in the Tiber, both those which were moored by the city, and those at the mouth of the river, were baptized"—*sunk*.* Soldiers, driven by the pursuit of the enemy into a river are said, while endeavouring to swim across it in their armour, to be baptized (*overwhelmed*) and destroyed, by the rush of a more violent current;† and the troops of Alexander, marching through a narrow passage, which the sea had overflowed, are described by Strabo as being in the waters a whole day, *μεχρι ὀμφαλοῦ βαπτιζόμενον*, "baptized up to the middle." Strabo. xiv. 982. Heraclides Ponticus speaks of a bar of iron heated red-hot as baptized by the smiths with water, not *εἰς τὸ ὕδωρ*, baptized into water, but, with the dative of the instrument, *ὑδατὶ βαπτιζεται*, "baptized *with* water"—a form of expression which answers precisely to a common though not invariable method of cooling and tempering iron; (Alleg. 494.) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus, commenting, in the life of Homer attributed to him, on the lines in the Iliad, xvi, 332.,

"He struck his neck with bilted sword
And all the sword was warmed with blood,"

observes: "By this term he gives greater emphasis, ὥς βαπτισθεντος οὕτω τοῦ ξίφους, ὥστε θερμανθηναι: the sword

* These examples are borrowed from Mr. Godwin's Treatise on Infant Baptism, p. 28. seq. In every case *βαπτίζω* is used.

† Ὁ ποταμὸς βαιοτέρῳ τῷ ρεύματι καταφερομενος πολλοὺς ἐβάπτισε, καὶ μετὰ τῶν ὅπλων διανηχομενος διεφθείρε. Thus rendered by Dr. Halley: "The rivers flowing down with a more violent current, baptized many, and destroyed them swimming across in their armour."—*Diod. Sic. Tom. ii., p. 142.*

being so baptized as to be even warmed,"—obviously by the rush of warm blood from the wound in the neck of Cleobulus. That which floats on the surface, as wood or cork, is spoken of as incapable of baptism, that is, of being submerged, as it is plainly not impossible to dip it. Pindar represents a virtuous man, assailed with slanders which though they might for a time affect could not permanently injure him, as saying: ἀβάπτιστός εἰμι, φελλός ὡς ὑπὲρ ἕρκος ἄλμας: "I am unbaptized, like a cork on the ridge of a wave," II. Pyth. 144. A shore from which the tide has receded is described by Aristotle as being, μὴ βαπτίζεσθαι, unbaptized, not deluged with water; and a bladder in a stormy sea is represented in the Sybilline verse quoted by Plutarch in his life of Theseus, as that which may be baptized, by the wave passing over it, but which cannot be dipped.* Figuratively also the mind is said to be baptized, overwhelmed, by the accumulation and pressure of calamities; the sun setting in the sea is poetically described as baptized in ocean's flood; and the soul, by the Alexandrine philosophers, is said to be baptized in the body, because inclosed in a material organism.

These examples might be greatly multiplied, but no addition is required to the weight of their testimony. The union of their separate values forms a product more than sufficient for the purpose they are designed to serve. The argument is not one of number but of fact, and hence few are equally good as many; better, indeed, as the smallness of the supply contributes, by a narrower range of evidence and a

* Of these two passages see a masterly and beautiful exposition in Halley's Lectures on Baptism, p.p. 357, 352. The passages are: "Ὅταν μὲν ἄμπωτις ᾗ μὴ βαπτίζεσθαι· ὅταν δὲ πλημμύρα κατακλύξεσθαι.—Arist. Mirab. Aus. 'Ἀσκός βαπτίζῃ, δύναι δὲ τοὶ οὐ θέμεις ἔσσι.—Plutarch Vita Theseus.

greater compression of thought, to a juster appreciation of individual cases. One clear instance of variety in its application is quite enough to liberate the verb *baptize* from that purely modal constraint to which it has been consigned in the assertion so often and confidently made, that it denotes "to dip, and nothing but to dip." But in the examples cited above several varieties appear, presenting this special advantage over a solitary illustration, that they establish, by the proof of its greater freedom and flexibility of expression, the really generic character of the term. The word is applied, we have seen, negatively, to that which cannot be submerged, and, positively, to that which from accident or necessity is already sunk. It describes the condition equally of those who are compelled to wade up to the waist in the sea, and of those who swimming across a river are overwhelmed and destroyed by the violence of the current. It is employed for the pouring of water on heated iron, and for the flow of blood from a newly-made wound on a warrior's sword. It represents alike the deluging of the coast by the advancing tide, and the inclusion of the soul in a body of flesh; the sinking of the sun in the west, and the oppression of the mind by sorrows; the putting, in short, by any means, the object into the element which baptizes, or the bringing, by any means, the element upon or around the object to be baptized. From this diversity of signification the conclusion is direct and inevitable, that *baptize* does not in classic usage express any fixed and definite action, much less the purely modal one of dipping; but that it has, though employed perhaps most frequently in the single sense of submersion, a breadth and variety of meaning which claim for it a power and pliancy of universal application.

But even were it otherwise, this would not compel the

admission, that the term must have in Scripture precisely the same sense that it bears in the classics. There it is used for purposes widely different from those to which it is applied by the authors of ancient Greece, and by writers who were Jews and not heathens, and whose vernacular tongue was Aramean and not Greek. On which accounts a modification of its native import, answering in some degree to the differences in its separate uses, would, from the known analogy in such cases, be a circumstance of just and natural probability. The language of the New Testament is confessedly far from the standard of pure Greek. It is Greek words moulded to the expression of Hebrew modes of thought. It is thus an idiom of broad and striking peculiarity; perfectly easy and proper to the sacred penmen, but presenting a wide departure from the elegant diction of Xenophon and of Plato. "It is acknowledged," says Dr. Campbell, "that it cannot strictly be denominated a separate language, or even dialect, when the term dialect is conceived to imply peculiarities in declension and conjugation. But, with the greatest justice, it is denominated a peculiar idiom, being not only Hebrew and Chaldaic phrases put in Greek words, but even single Greek words used in senses in which they never occur in the writings of profane authors, and which can be learnt only from the extent of signification given to some Hebrew or Chaldee word, corresponding to the Greek, in its primitive and most ordinary sense."*

Besides, pagan authority cannot, however useful in some cases of Scripture exegesis, be safely admitted as a certain interpreter of the Christian revelation. The language of the New Testament is not only a peculiar idiom, but it is Greek, previously employed by heathen writers, devoted to purely religious objects; and heathen expositions are by

* Prelim. Diss. I.

no means unexceptionable respondents to evangelical ideas. Many a word has been modified in its original acceptation, sometimes wholly deflected from it, by its consecration from a common to an eminently sacred purpose. Very different from their classical meaning is the scriptural sense of law, righteousness, sanctification, angel, resurrection, humility, grace, flesh, spirit, and many others ; and nothing exists to show that a similar change of meaning was impossible to *baptize*, even though its primitive and customary import was "to dip, and nothing but dip." For these reasons it is palpably unjust and arbitrary to demand for this verb, when appropriated to the service of religion, the same interpretation that it may be thought to have when found in the pagan literature of ancient Greece. Inspiration is an authority to itself, and the Scriptural use of the term is best determined by a consideration of Scriptural evidence. To this, therefore, let us briefly apply ourselves.

The first instance in which the word occurs is in the Septuagint version of 2 Kings v. 14, and is probably to be understood in the sense of a partial ablution. In recording the miraculous cure of the Syrian leper the sacred historian, through his Greek translator, informs us, "And Naaman went down and *baptized himself in, or at, the Jordan seven times*, according to the command of Elisha : and his flesh came again as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." The defence of the common translation, "he *dipped himself*," rests principally on the assumption that טָבַל, of which *baptize* is the representative, means only to immerse. Scholars of the first eminence, however, says Dr. Beecher, "of whom it is enough to mention Suicer," believe and affirm that it passed early from the sense of to dip to that of to wash ; a judgment which admirably meets the require-

ments of this case, as it harmonises the word descriptive of Naaman's obedience with that which expresses the prophet's command. This reconciliation is actually given, and given verbally, in the Vulgate, by the use of the same term for both command and obedience, and a term signifying not to dip, but to wash. In this version the Syrian general is directed, "*lavare septies in Jordane*"—to wash seven times in Jordan; and agreeably to this command it is said, "*lavit septies in Jordane*"—he washed seven times in Jordan. It is further to be observed that, with the meaning of to wash, the word also acquired that of *to dye, to stain*, in which sense it is applied to the staining of Joseph's coat with the blood of a kid which his brethren had killed for the purpose. It was this idea of staining that they wished to convey to their father's mind, and the idea they did convey, by the impression that a wild beast had devoured him; and it is this which the Greek substitute, *μολύνω*, in the version of the Seventy, has faithfully expressed.*

As then, in the example under notice, the Hebrew verb may possibly denote something less than to immerse, so may its Greek representative *baptize*; and this conceded, the possible, viewed with especial reference to the circumstances of the case, becomes all but certain. In the first place, the disease of Naaman appears to have been a local one, for he thought the man of God would touch, and thereby heal, the part affected. It required, therefore, only a local application of the appointed remedy. Nothing more than this was prescribed, and probably nothing else than this would be attempted. The washing would naturally be confined to the seat of the disease. Secondly, the direction of the prophet was, "Go and *wash* in Jordan seven times," the

* Gen. xxxvii. 31.

word employed being one which, without respect to mode, signifies simply *to wash*: obedience to this injunction is described as a *baptism*—"then went he down and *baptized* himself seven times in Jordan, according to the command of Elisha; and his flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean." Now there is not the slightest intimation that the *mode* of the washing thus enjoined was present to the thoughts of either Elisha or Naaman; there is *prima facie* evidence against it, as the object of the washing—the cure—was that which seems to have engrossed the attention of both; and this requiring only the use of water might, for aught that appears to the contrary, have been accomplished by its application in any way by which the general sense of washing could be expressed.

Besides, Naaman, already wounded and mortified, was in no temper to exceed the prophet's instructions; yet, after his reluctance to follow them had been overcome, his desire of restoration would naturally keep him to their literal fulfilment; and this literal fulfilment, having taken place, is spoken of as being according to the saying of the man of God. What else then was the baptism of the Syrian leper than a simple ablution? And since the disease for which he baptized was local, what other could it be than a local ablution? The prophet commands him *to wash*, using a word which, both in the Hebrew and the Septuagint, denotes the act without regard to the manner of cleansing; and the haughty captain obeys "the saying" of Elisha by *baptizing* himself. If baptize expresses the action of to wash, it cannot in this instance be a verb of mode.* Though it might not be safe

* *רחץ* signifies generally to wash, to wash either the whole or any part of the human body. Gesenius. It is represented in the version of the Seventy by *λούω, νίπτω, πλύνω*, Gen. xviii. 4. xliii. 31. Ex. xxix. 17. xxx. 18. Lev. i. 9. xiv. 9. Deut. xxi. 6. Ps. xxvi. 6. lxxiii. 18. Ia. i. 16. These verbs are thus discriminated by Dr. Beecher: "λούω of the own

to affirm that the direction of the prophet was given with any reference to the law of purification from leprosy ordained by Moses, it is yet difficult to believe that the institute was not in his mind. "And he shall sprinkle upon him that is to be cleansed from the leprosy seven times, and shall pronounce him clean. And he that is to be cleansed shall wash his clothes, and shave off all his hair, and wash himself in water, that he may be clean." Lev. xiv. 7. 8. This at least suggests the probability that the washing prescribed by Elisha would not exceed the ablution enjoined in the Law.

In the Old Testament only one other instance of baptize occurs, and it is used in a purely tropical sense. It is found in Isaiah xxi. 4, and in the common version is rendered, "fearfulness hath affrighted me." The literal translation is, *ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει*—"Iniquity baptizes (overwhelms) me," which supports the classic import of the term, but lends no countenance to the theory of dipping. We can feel the propriety and beauty of the figure which makes iniquity *overwhelm*, but not the elegance of that which makes it immerse or *dip* us.

In the New Testament *baptize* is applied to the frequent force denotes to wash, or to purify: in fact it is more generally used to denote a washing or purifying of the whole body, whether by sprinkling, affusion, or immersion—but that it is also applied to washing hands, face, and feet, &c. *Νίπτω* applies generally to washing of hands, face, and feet, also, but more rarely, to bathing the whole body, in the case of men and animals. *Πλύνω* is generally applied to clothes—but also to the body and all its parts, also to cups, metals, and various animal substances. Proof of all these statements is at hand, and could be produced, if needed."—*Baptism*, p. p. 210. 211. This, and much more, is said in reply to a statement of Dr. Carson, that *λούω*, the Greek rendering of the prophet's command *wash*, signifies to bathe the whole body by immersion. For an able and ample refutation of this dictum, see, besides the work of President Beecher, a dissertation on *the word* by Professor Wilson in his work on Infant Baptism, p. 149.

ablutions of the Pharisees, and to the washing of cups and pots, brazen vessels and couches; in which connexion it must come very much within the requirement of immersion. The instances mentioned by the Evangelists are two, the first of which is thus given: "When the Pharisees and Scribes saw some of the disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashed hands, they found fault. For the Pharisees and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft,* eat not, holding the traditions of the elders. And when they come from the market, except they wash, (*baptize themselves*) they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, as the washing (*baptisms*) of cups and pots, of brazen vessels and of couches." Mark vii. 2—5. The second is recorded as follows: "A certain Pharisee besought Jesus to dine with him: and he went in, and sat down to meat. And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed (*baptized*) before dinner." Luke xi. 37, 38.

These examples refer to the same custom, and each assists the interpretation of the other. The disciples brought upon themselves the censure of certain Pharisees because they did not *wash* their hands before eating; and their Master excited the astonishment of one of the same sect because he omitted to *baptize* before dinner. The cases are perfectly analagous in all but the terms used for the purifying process. In the one *wash* is given, in the other *baptize*. Does not this suggest their complete identity of meaning in these instances? Which is the more likely, that a difference of custom is indicated by a difference of word, or that the same custom is illustrated by two words expressing the same idea? Who, free from the trammels of a theory could doubt, that the omitted baptism in the case

* Πλυμῶ. This means literally with the flat.

of our Lord, was the neglected washing of their hands in that of his disciples? "The Pharisees, and all the Jews, unless they wash their hands, do not eat;" the host of the Saviour, observing his inattention to this practice, is struck with surprise. To eat with unwashen hands was deemed unseemly and indelicate, the more so as in those days art had very scantily supplied the conveniences of modern tables. It was also to defile the food, and make it, in the estimation of the Pharisees, unfit for use: nothing therefore could be required of Jesus but that which was necessary to preserve its cleanness, and give the impression of a delicate purity in eating; and this was simply to wash himself "after the manner of the purifying of the Jews." Besides, it must be noted, the invitation given to our Lord was not a formal but a casual one, offered and accepted at the conclusion of a discourse he had just addressed to the people; and the baptism expected of him was of a character suited to the incidents of the occasion,—such as could be performed at once, immediately on entering a stranger's house, without notice or preparation, without difficulty and even without invitation. All which circumstances are so many probabilities against immersion, and in defence of the supposition that the baptism of Jesus was nothing more than a partial ablution.*

And what else, unless indeed a ceremonial sprinkling, was the baptism of the Pharisees on their return from the market? The design of this baptism was to purify them from the defilement contracted, or supposed to be contracted, by intercourse with the common people; but unless such

* Josephus, it is true, says that the Essenes bathed themselves before dinner. De. Bel. Jud. II. 8. But Josephus himself was a Pharisee, and the very circumstance of his mentioning this practice as peculiar to a small sect, of extremely rigorous discipline, is proof that it formed no *part of the ritual of the people in general.*

defilement was universal as well as real, and not, as in most cases it would be, only partial and possible, the purification of the whole person by immersion would not be necessary. Even if it were universal, washing, as ordinarily performed, would be a more appropriate operation than the mere act of dipping; while in fact both would be alike superfluous, as the purpose of the ceremony would be equally answered, and answered consistently with an established ordinance, by the more convenient mode of sprinkling. Num. xix. 19. Moreover, what an irksome service, what "a yoke of bondage," would this alleged custom of frequent immersion be; especially for occasions so slight, and an object so trivial! What immense labour and time would its regular observance involve; what a copious supply of water, in a city where water was scarce; and what expensive preparations of baths, &c, in houses of which many of the families were poor! Of the actual preparations made, and therefore of the probable kind of ceremony practised, we have a suggestive account in the narrative of the marriage in Cana of Galilee. "There were set there six water-pots of stone, *after the manner of the purifying of the Jews*, containing two or three firkins (measures) apiece." John ii. 6. It is exceedingly improbable that there were six baths or cisterns in one house large enough to allow of the immersion of the same number of persons; while the greatest capacity which, with any show of reason, can be assigned to the vessels in question, is insufficient to prove that the manner of Jewish purification was otherwise than by washing or sprinkling. If we suppose, as is commonly done, that the *measure* was equivalent to eight or nine English gallons (and this would be an extraordinary quantity to be converted, or even prepared for conversion, into wine), an ample supply is given

for an ordinary ablution, but not enough for the dipping of the whole person.

Nor is it likely that by the baptism of cups and pots, brazen vessels and couches, immersion is intended. These the Pharisees are said to have held, that is, they had been taught by the traditions of the elders to observe them as religious rites. The word rendered "tables" in the common version signifies couches for reclining at meals. This interpretation of *κλινῶν* is demanded as well by the context as by the voice of all impartial critics. These domestic baptisms were not mere washings for cleanliness, as there was nothing in these, as practised by the Pharisees, so peculiar as to make them worthy of especial mention. They were traditionary customs and inherited beliefs, "held" with religious conviction, and therefore as forms of ceremonial purification. That such was their character few will doubt, and that sprinkling was the mode of their observance is probable almost to certainty from the fact, that this as a rite of purification was a service perfectly familiar to the Jews, and expressly established by the law of Moses; that the immersion of large vessels would be difficult, and of couches in daily use at meals injurious and destructive; and that Christ in describing and reproving the fastidious sanctity of the Pharisees uses the word *καθαρίζετε*, *purify*, instead of baptize, and specifies the *outside* of the cup and the platter as that to which their operation is limited. From these two references to Pharisaic baptism the proof appears conclusive, that *baptize* does not always mean to immerse.

The following passage contains yet further evidence. In describing the ordinances of divine service peculiar to the first covenant, the Apostle says, "which stood only in meats

and drinks, and *divers baptisms*, services of the body, imposed until the time of the reformation.* The conjunction connecting "divers washings" with "carnal ordinances" in the common version, is rejected by the most eminent critics of the New Testament. The latter phrase is manifestly introduced by the writer not to add to the number of ordinances just mentioned, but to indicate their general character and imperfect utility, as services pertaining to the body rather than to the mind. The "divers washings" continue the enumeration of the Apostle; the expression "carnal ordinances" supplies a characteristic description of the whole. The former therefore are associated with the "meats and drinks," as among the observances of the tabernacle "which could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;" and both enter as elements into the contrast between Judaism and Christianity, which it is the main design of the eighth, ninth, and tenth chapters to illustrate and establish. The argument is, that the two economies are widely discriminated both in essence and influence; the one being ceremonial and human, the other spiritual and divine; the former sanctifying only to the purification of the flesh, the latter purging the conscience from dead works to serve the living God. The "divers washings," thus belonging to the "carnal ordinances" that were incompetent to purify the conscience of "him who did the service," must consequently be the baptisms of persons, and not of things; the more so as we should scarcely require to be told that the ceremonial cleansing of pot or cup had no power to sanctify the heart. But of these baptisms the Apostle in the 13th verse, where he seems to condense and apply the whole argument, specifies *sprinkling*—"the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean"

* Heb. ix. 10.

—as one. The proof of this lies not only in the general course of the reasoning, but in a remarkable similarity of language in the tenth and thirteenth verses. In the former “divers baptisms” are called *ordinances of the flesh*; in the latter sprinkling is said to *sanctify to the purifying of the flesh*. Sprinkling is hence one of the “carnal ordinances,” and if so, one of the “divers baptisms.” But independent of this, and yet corroborative of it, it is certain that the baptisms referred to, as included in the “ordinances of divine service” pertaining to the tabernacle, were not immersions of the whole person, as no such immersion, whether practised or not, was enjoined in the ritual of Moses. The ceremony prescribed was either, particularly, that of sprinkling, or, generally, that of washing.* Supposing, however, immersion had been of the number of the baptisms commanded, it could not have been the only one, as with no propriety of language could the term *diverse* have then been applied to it. Uniformity in the manner would have given identity to the character. But the Apostle speaks not only of a plurality of baptisms, but of a plurality distinguished by diversity. How could there have been a diversity of immersions? Not surely by an immersion of diverse things. As the baptisms were all for ceremonial purification, and all therefore were alike in purpose and meaning, the only diversity possible was one of outward form.

Now to establish the doctrine that baptism is valid only as immersion is the mode, it must be shewn that the word

* Ex. xxx. 19, 20, 21. Num. viii. 5—7. xix. 19, 20. “No terms which any Hebrew scholar will pretend had the signification of dipping, are ever used in reference to any one of the ceremonial purifications of the person. For those connected with the service of the tabernacle, and for all besides, words are employed denoting to *wash*, to *purify*, to *sprinkle*.” *Godwin. 63.*

baptize has no other meaning in classic, or if in classic, in sacred literature. But the opposite of this is capable of the most satisfactory demonstration. In both baptisms of *divers* kinds, including almost every conceivable application of water, is expressed by the very same term; from which the conclusion seems inevitable, that the verb is generic and not peculiar, significant of an ordinance rather than descriptive of a mode, and therefore not more proper to immersion than to affusion or sprinkling.

2. The argument is strengthened by the fact, that where water is used in connexion with baptism, the verb has a construction with it which indicates that water is the instrument *by* which, rather than the element *in* which, the operation is performed. To express the idea of immersion strictly and fully, the preposition *εἰς*, *into*, should precede the substantive *ὕδωρ*, *water*; but no such construction occurs in the word of God. In every instance either the dative case of the substantive is used, thus implying that the action of the verb is accomplished by means of the object specified; or a preposition is introduced which serves the like purpose, and gives expression to the same idea. Thus *ἐν ὕδατι βαπτίζω*, and *ἐν ὕδατι βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι*, have both the same grammatical force, and are equally rendered, "I baptize with water." Any other sense in fact would be inappropriate, not to say inadmissable, especially where repentance, or the name of the Supreme Being, is given as that *unto* or *into* which the person is said to be baptized.

That *ἐν* does frequently assign to the substantive the office of an instrument in the production of a certain effect, is almost too well known to require the illustration of particular examples. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God *with* all thy heart, and *with* all thy soul, and *with* all thy mind." In every clause of this passage, *ἐν* is represented

by *with*. "Lord," said they who witnessed Judas' betrayal of his master, "shall we smite (*ἐν*) *with* the sword?" "Salute one another (*ἐν*) *with* a holy kiss." "If thou shalt confess *with* thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe *with* thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." The same preposition occurs in both parts of this sentence, while in the verse following, the dative case without the preposition is used,—"*for with* the heart man believeth unto righteousness,"—shewing that the regimen in each instance is the same, that which grammarians call the dative of the instrument. "Overcome evil (*ἐν*) *with* good." "Glorify God *with* your body, and *with* your spirit which are God's." "*With* it (the tongue) bless we God, and *with* it curse we men." "He that killeth *with* the sword must be killed *with* the sword." The following passage is strikingly to the point: "And almost all things are according to the law purged (*ἐν*) *with* blood;*" for these purifications being effected by sprinkling, any other rendering is simply impossible.

No permission therefore is asked, no license is required, for the translation of *ἐν ὕδατι*, *with* water. Common usage and strict grammatical authority are a sufficient justification. This justification, indeed, is the more complete from the circumstance that, in several places, *ἐν ὕδατι* is so contrasted with *ἐν Πνεύματι*, as to require precisely the same construction. "I indeed baptize you *with* water," said the Forerunner of Jesus, "but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." Matt. iii. 11. See also John i. 26, 31, 33. In Luke iii. 16, Acts i. 5, and xi. 16, the dative of the noun is used without the governing preposition. "John indeed baptized *with* water; but ye

* Matt. xxii. 37. Luke xxii. 49. Rom. xvi. 16, x. 9, 10. xii. 21., Cor. vi. 20. Jas. iii. 9. Rev. xiii. 10.

shall be baptized *with the Holy Ghost*." The syntax is identical in both branches of the sentence, and the antithesis is brought out only by the same literal rendering. As one is construed, so must be the other. But baptism *with* and not *into* the Spirit is the plain and natural meaning of the second part of the passage; hence baptism *with* and not *into* water is the just and obvious version of the first. The former, while beautifully harmonizing with established forms of speech, not only represents the common teaching of Scripture respecting the operation of Divine influence, but falls in, as we shall afterwards see, with the account of the fulfilment of the promise of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost; the latter, therefore, regulated by its example, is logically consistent and inevitable. But if water is the means *by* which, immersion cannot be the mode *according* to which, the baptism is effected. The water must be applied to the person, and not the person be put into the water.

There is, however, it is right to state, one instance in which the preposition *ἐν* is connected with the verb to baptize, and is supposed to carry its action to the following substance; but in this case the substantive is Jordan and not water. In Mark i. 9, it is said, that "Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John (*ἐν*) in Jordan." Very much has been made of this passage; not wisely, as it seems to us, for, to say nothing of the strange reading, "Jesus was *dipped into* the Jordan," in so far as this construction is deemed the proper one for an act of immersion, it takes from the force of those other passages in which this construction is wanting. If when immersion is intended *ἐν* forms the true regimen of βαπτίζω, how shall we account for this being the only instance of its occurrence? And what shall be made of that large class of

examples in which a different preposition is given? On our principle no special difficulty would be presented, even on the supposition that immersion was the only possible meaning of the words, as we claim for *baptize* an application broad enough to cover every mode of observance. But such supposition would be very wide of the truth. The preposition *εἰς* has no absolutely single meaning, but denotes *in* as well as *into*, and *at* as well as either. In this last sense it is employed in many passages, and chiefly, as in Mark, in connexion with places. "Phillip was found *at* Azotus." "When I was *at* Jerusalem." "For as thou has testified of me *at* Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also *at* Rome."* Thus rendered in the example in question, every imaginary difficulty disappears, and a just interpretation is given to the whole passage,—“Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John *at the Jordan*.”

3. The term baptize is used in several instances,—as in the relation of historical facts, and the promise of spiritual operations,—in respect to which the idea of immersion is inconceivable. One of these is the following: “Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; and were all *baptized* into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.”† Let the common version be displaced by the Baptist rendering, and we have then the curious announcement, that all the fathers were *dipped into Moses*. To propose this is all but to refute it. That the baptism of the Israelites was not by immersion, the history of the transaction sufficiently evinces. The Egyptians were immersed, or overwhelmed, but the people of God were not. The essence of the miracle, indeed, consisted in this.

* Acts viii. 40, xxv. 15, xxiii. 11. † Cor. x. 1, 2.

One sank as lead in the mighty waters, the other passed over on dry ground. "With the blast of thy nostrils," says Moses, "the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as a heap, the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon the dry ground." As there was no immersion in the sea, so there was none in the cloud. Had, in fact, the one gone over the Israelites, or the other covered them, there would not strictly have been a dipping. But the narrative directly informs us, that the cloud went before to guide, and stood behind to protect them. Nothing can be plainer than the following: "And the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them: and it came between the camp of the Egyptians and the camp of Israel; and it was a cloud and darkness to them, but it gave light by night to these: so that the one came not near the other all the night."* True the Apostle says they "were *under* the cloud," but while this literally understood would not have been a nebulous immersion, the obvious meaning is, that they were under the protection of the cloud, as the symbol of the Divine presence. It is thus Isaiah refers to and explains the phenomenon: "Then shall Jehovah create upon every dwelling place of Mount Zion and upon her assemblies, a cloud of day and a smoke, and the brightness of a flaming fire by night: for over all that is glorious shall be a *protection*."†

But though no immersion, there was a baptism. How were the fathers of the Jewish nation baptized? Figuratively, say some; but if in figure the cloud and the sea were visibly instrumental to it, and their service in the operation requires to be defined. By the spray of the sea, and rain from heaven, others have suggested. This opinion

* Ex. xiv. 19, 20. † Is. iv. 5.

is not destitute of foundation. The former might be occasioned by the "strong east wind" which all night swept over the waters, and laid bare their depths; the latter by the storm of thunder and rain which mingled together heaven and earth. "Thou hast," says the Psalmist, in his beautiful allusion to the deliverance of Israel, "Thou hast with thine arm redeemed thy people, the sons of Jacob and Joseph. The waters saw thee, O God, the waters saw thee; they were afraid: the depths also were troubled: *the clouds poured out water.*"* If by either or both these the baptism in the sea was effected, sprinkling would be the mode in one case, affusion in the other.

It seems however probable that, in the passage under consideration, the word baptize has less to do with the mere accidents of baptism than with its nature and design. The Apostle regards Moses as the type of Christ, and Christian baptism, spiritually understood, as the antitype of the national baptism which took place at the Red sea. As then by the former men are delivered from the power of Satan, and consecrated to Christ; so by the latter the Israelites were redeemed from the tyranny of Pharaoh, and set apart to Moses. This appears the more likely to be the meaning as the preposition *ἐν*, which is often used in the sense of instrumentality, is connected in the dative with "the cloud and the sea," intimating that these were the means by which the baptism was effected. But as there is nothing to shew that the people were in immediate contact with either, the cloud and the sea must be viewed as answering the end of baptism—expressing its substance rather than giving its form. And then a beautifully consistent and satisfactory interpretation is given to the entire passage. The Apostle is understood to say (what perfectly agrees

* Ps. lxxvii. 15, 16, 17.

with the facts of the case), that by means of the cloud and the sea, the fathers were separated from Egyptian bondage and superstition, and dedicated unto Moses as their divinely appointed teacher and guide. According to this supposition, as indeed according to every legitimate one, the idea of immersion becomes impossible. There was a baptism, but no dipping.

Another of these instances is the promise of the Holy Ghost. To the multitudes who flocked to his baptism John said, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire."* To the operations of Divine influence mode cannot with literal exactness be applied. How mind acts upon mind, and, especially, how the Infinite acts upon the finite, is one of the secret things which belong to the Lord our God. The fact is indisputable, but the process remains ever a mystery. It is only material agents that are conceivable under the conditions of time and space: it is only of them, therefore, that mode can properly be predicated. The necessity of the Holy Spirit in the work of human salvation admits of no question. His presence in the heart may be inferred with the most absolute certainty, but cannot itself be apprehended as an objective reality. The influence is too subtle for even the keen analysis of reason; the operation lies too deep for the piercing glance of consciousness. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." The sound is heard, but the thing is unknown; the effect is realized, but the agency is hidden. The believer is assured of the change produced, and as "that which is born of the Spirit is spirit,"

* Matt. iii. 11.

he at once refers it to the only Power competent to effect it. But here his intelligence ends. "Clouds and darkness" resist all further inquiry. Experience gives the result, and faith assigns the cause, but secrecy veils the process. No term therefore denoting a particular action, whether immersion or affusion, can, with any approach to literal propriety, be applied to the agency of the Holy Spirit.

Tropical language, however, has laws of its own. That which when taken in its plain and natural sense is wholly inconceivable, becomes eminently appropriate and beautiful when designed as a figure. Hence the impropriety of ascribing mode to the Holy Spirit entirely disappears, when material objects, expressed or understood, are the emblems of his office and influence. An object of this kind is employed in the passage under review. A baptism of the Holy Spirit is promised, but of the Holy Spirit as symbolised by fire. Now the baptism must agree with the element. The figure must be consistent with itself in its whole expression; if not, deformity takes the place of beauty, and precision of thought is lost in confusion of terms. As fire is the emblem of spiritual influence, the verb construed with it must have an action suited to its nature. But dipping cannot be such action. By no licence of language, or legitimate flight of fancy, can immersion and fire be made to accord. Fire might be brought upon an object, and made to kindle so as to overwhelm it; but this, though a baptism according to classic usage, would not strictly be an immersion. An individual might be put into fire, and thereby suffer an immersion in the proper sense of the word; but it would require a singular taste, and a most obstinate adherence to the supposed inflexibility of a term, to regard the Herald of Jesus Christ as saying to the people,

“He that cometh after me shall *dip* you into the Holy Ghost and into fire.”

But supposing no violence to taste or disregard of probability could be pleaded against this construction, it could hardly be reconciled to the manner in which the promise itself was fulfilled. Referring to the words of the Baptist, Jesus, immediately before his ascension, said to his disciples, “John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence.” And accordingly, “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them: and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.”* If in the original terms of the promise there is little to countenance the idea of dipping, in the circumstances of its fulfilment there is, if possible, still less. Every emblem of the Spirit’s presence and agency is against it. The sound *filled* the house; the fiery tongues *sat upon* the disciples; they were all *filled* with the Holy Ghost. There was no immersion even in figure, much less a fiery immersion. Were it admitted that the *wind* filled the house, immersion would still be incredible, as in that case the wind would come upon the people, and not the people be put into the wind. But the *sound* and not the wind filled the house. The wind only supplies the comparison and describes the sound. It was a sound *like that* of a rushing storm, serving, as an orchestral prelude to some grand oratorio, to announce and prepare for the subsequent manifestations.

* Acts i. 5, iii. 1—4.

The fire was the real fulfilment of the promise, and, therefore, the most material part of the phenomena. It was not a stream, but only *tongues*, of fire; it did not cover or encircle the assembled disciples, it merely *sat upon* each of them. If, however, there was not an immersion, there was an affusion. This is the character assigned to the baptism by inspiration itself; for Peter, discoursing to the contemptuous yet astonished multitude on the miraculous occurrence, said, "Jesus hath *shed forth* this which ye now see and hear;" which again anticipates and confirms the subsequent language of another Apostle; "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which he *shed on us* abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour."

This suggests the further remark, that where the Holy Spirit is spoken of, whether directly or by implication, under the emblem of water, the manner of his communication is described by sprinkling or pouring rather than by immersion. Indeed as Divine influence is an energy to be exerted and a blessing to be received, it would be incongruous to speak of it as something by which an individual is to be overwhelmed, or into which he is to be immersed. Figurative language must have a natural fitness to the truth it is designed to illustrate; otherwise, like a broken mirror which confuses the image, or a deceptive atmosphere which distorts the object, it only offends the taste while it misleads the judgment. And hence, as in conversion an individual is not dipped into the Spirit, but the Spirit operates upon the individual, immersion in the Spirit cannot be accepted as representing the true doctrine of spiritual influence.

That pouring or sprinkling is the mode commonly assigned to Divine operation, a variety of Scriptures sufficiently attests. In one prophecy certain calamities are foretold

as continuing "until the Spirit be *poured from on high*;" after which, and as the result of the effusion, it is said, "The wilderness shall be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field shall be counted for a forest." In another Jehovah declares: "I will *pour water* upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground: I will *pour my Spirit* upon thy seed, and my blessing upon thy offspring." In a third He promises: "Then will I *sprinkle clean water* upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will *put my Spirit within you*, and cause you to walk in my statutes." In others He says: "I will *pour upon* the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications;" "I will *pour out* my Spirit upon all flesh."* Agreeably to these predictions our Lord said to his disciples, "Ye shall *receive* power, after that the Holy Ghost is *come upon you*." "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost *fell on* all them who heard the word. And they of the circumcision who believed were astonished, because that on the Gentiles also was *poured out* the gift of the Holy Ghost." In one passage this mode of spiritual communion is significantly identified with the spiritual baptism promised by Jesus Christ. In recounting the circumstances of his mission to Cornelius and his kinsmen, Peter informs the assembled brethren, "As I began to speak, the Holy Ghost *fell on them*, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*."† The bearing of these passages on the

* Is. xxxii. 15. xlv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Zech. xii. 10. Joel ii. 28.

† Acts i. 8. x. 44, 45. xi. 15, 16.

question though indirect is obvious. They supply that kind of incidental testimony which is often only second in importance to evidence of the highest class. If water is related to the Spirit and baptism to re-generation, as the sign is to the thing signified, then the mode figuratively ascribed to the Spirit, and by Peter identified with the word baptize, implies that immersion is so far from being the only mode of baptism, that it does not possess an equal Scriptural authority with sprinkling or affusion. If the shedding or outpouring of the Spirit is a baptism by the Spirit, the shedding or outpouring of water in the administration of the Christian ordinance is a baptism with water.

4. A formidable difficulty to immersion is presented in the multitudes baptized by John, and the thousands who in a few hours received the rite on the day of Pentecost. Immersion is a tedious and laborious process, and, as now practised, is generally preceded by some formal preparation. It could not be performed for several hours together, and many days in succession, without insupportable fatigue and great personal injury. But even if it could, the number immersed by a single individual, during a period equal to that of John's ministry (which probably preceded that of our Lord only by a brief space), would fall immensely short of the multitudes admitted to his baptism. It is recorded that Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, went out to him, and were baptized of him.* That this does not mean the entire population must be conceded; but that it includes a considerable proportion cannot reasonably be doubted. What the ordinary population of Judea and the vicinity of the Jordan was, it is impossible to say; but as Josephus gives nearly three millions as the number of people present at Jerusalem during the Pass-over, one million cannot be deemed an excessive estimate.

* Mat. iii. 5.

Double that amount seems a much more probable computation. Now of this number it is not too much to think that one half is intended by the expressions, "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan," especially when this statement is connected with the fact, so variously attested, of John's great popularity. For though the priesthood and a few others of rank and profligate manners despised him, the people generally held him in great esteem, so much so that when Herod would have put him to death, "he feared the multitude because they counted him as a prophet." The chief priests and elders also, when pressed for the origin of John's baptism, dared not ascribe it to men, because, said they, "we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet." But let the number be taken at one fourth, two hundred and fifty thousand, and, on the supposition that John immersed them all in the Jordan, a work is assigned to him which would have covered not only the few months over which his ministry extended, but a considerable portion, several years at least, of his whole life. And then imagine this work—tedious, toilsome, dangerous—the labour of one man, and this man the greatest of the prophets; of him whom prophecy foretold, and Gabriel announced; whose mission it was to go before the Lord in the spirit and power of Elias, to prepare his way by turning the children of Israel to the Lord their God; and of whom the Saviour in describing his character said, not that he was capable of great physical endurance, but that "he was a burning and a shining light!" The Baptist could easily have sprinkled such a number of individuals, as the priests were accustomed to sprinkle the water of separation upon the clean, and this would have left him both time and strength for the more important duty of public instruction; but to have dipped them in the river Jordan would have been physically impossible.

Similar reasoning applies to the baptism of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost ; with this difference, however, that the immersion of this multitude, if distributed among the twelve Apostles and those of the one hundred and twenty disciples who were competent to the work, is not itself absolutely inconceivable. It is yet extremely improbable, and requires for its proof much stronger testimony than can be adduced. It may be that many were engaged ; but the supposition is perfectly gratuitous. No ground of inference is given that they went into the water, and stood there until the protracted and painful labour was accomplished. On the theory of believers' baptism as now exemplified, this would be impracticable within the time specified for so much of the day would be spent in preliminary inquiry and personal preparation, as to leave an insufficient portion of it for the actual process of immersion. In addition to which there is this special difficulty in the case, that Jerusalem ordinarily afforded no supply of water equal to the immersion of so large a number in a period so brief, particularly during the summer—the season of the year when the occurrence is said to have taken place.

In connexion with the multitudes baptized must be considered the public character of the occasion, and the association together in the same observance of men and women. Nothing must be supposed in the administration of the rite which does not comport with the utmost decency, and with that “shamefacedness and sobriety” with which the Apostle requires that women should be clothed. But immersion in public places would scarcely satisfy this requirement. Even in nations where the intercourse of life is less restrained than in the East, the dipping in a river of large numbers of both sexes, in the presence of a crowd of *spectators*, would be thought an offence against propriety, and would certainly be attended with much more of hesita-

tion and shrinking, than seem to have existed in the cases of popular baptism recorded in the evangelical narrative. What then would it have been to the women of Judea, with their reserved habits and scrupulous delicacy of sentiment, at a distance from home and without local accommodation, dressed in the flowing robes of the East and with no change of raiment, under the novel excitements of the hour, and with little opportunity for that inward discipline which fortifies opinion to conviction, and turns desire into purpose. Supposing that the same fastidious reserve did not exist among the Jewish as is now common to the Oriental ladies, it requires a most sovereign disregard of probability to believe, that large companies of men and women,—whose ordinary intercourse was severely decorous, and whose habitual propriety of behaviour would certainly not relax under religious impression, and before the ascetic purity of John the Baptist,—successively presented themselves, with few of the conveniences which the occasion demanded, for public immersion in a river; more conspicuously so from this additional consideration, that, as not all who were drawn together by the fame of the “man sent from God” were made devout by his teaching, the operation would have to take place not only in presence of the parties themselves, but also of many others—a large concourse it may be—who if attracted by curiosity, were retained by no higher motive.

This last remark applies with especial force to the multitudes baptized at the Pentecost, as in their case the ceremony was performed in the heart of a crowded city, and, therefore, though the number baptized was less the publicity of the occasion would be greater. Indeed, that immersion was administered to the multitudes who attended the ministry of John, and to the thousands who heard the word gladly at the Pentecost, is a supposition encumbered with

difficulties which only accumulate as the narrative is carefully examined, and perplex the more the more their character is distinctly ascertained. But let sprinkling take the place of immersion, and the difficulties immediately vanish, as baptism according to this mode, while perfectly easy in fact, would be scrupulously delicate in form

Why then were Jordan and Ænon selected for the administration of the rite? If a river and "much water" were chosen for the baptisms of John, for what purpose could they be required than immersion? The inquiry is not unnatural, but the reasoning is far more popular than convincing. Were it impossible to answer the question, it might be sufficient to demand in return, why the blind man was commanded to go and wash in the pool of Siloam. In both instances the quantity of water greatly exceeded that which the operation rendered necessary; but in neither does this excess logically imply immersion. The baptisms of John necessarily took place out of doors, and as running water, while generally preferable to stagnant, especially in a warm country like Judea, had been already prescribed by the law for ceremonial purification, the neighbourhood of fountains and streams would naturally, irrespective of any mode whatever, be selected by the Baptist as the best suited to his design. Besides, his preaching attracted, as it was intended to attract, immense multitudes, and the quiet, fertile valley of the Jordan was much more favourable to the assembling together of such large numbers, and also to the impression upon them of his character and ministry, than a busy and thickly populated city. Once there, and remaining it may be for some days, water would be needed for other purposes than baptism, for beasts of burden, and for the ordinary uses of daily life; and, as many were doubtless assembled *at the same time*, "much water" would be required. Let

this consideration be duly weighed, and the reasoning which infers immersion from the choice of Jordan and Ænon will lose its effect; as, to make it quite valid, it must be shewn, that baptism was the only purpose for which a considerable supply of water was demanded.

In respect to Ænon, it should be observed, that the name itself signifies *fountains* or *wells*, and, therefore, that the phrase "much water" probably denotes no large collection of water, but many springs or rills. Further, what in warm climates would be deemed "much water," in milder latitudes would be taken for a very moderate quantity, much and little being relative to existing standards and current ideas. Finally, it ought not to escape our notice, that although so much stress is laid upon the selection of Jordan and Ænon as the scenes of John's baptism, these, if we except the "river side" spoken of in Lydia's case, are the only two out of many places specified in the New Testament, in connexion with which an abundance of water is either mentioned or can with propriety be inferred. Indeed, from the general style of the Divine record in relating the instances of baptism, the rite appears to have been so simple, so free from the embarrassment of fixed external conditions, and so capable of adaptation to every variety of time and place, that it could with equal facility be administered day or night, in a city or by the way side, at a river or in a private house, by the many streams of Ænon or in the common prison at Philippi. This fitly introduces the following remark :

5. The Divine authority of sprinkling or affusion is supported by the several examples of Christian baptism recorded in the New Testament. That of the Pentecost has been already noticed, and as the design of the argument is not to exhaust the evidence but simply to establish the principle, nothing beyond a rapid survey of two or three

others will now be attempted. "As they went on their way, they came to a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more."* On the baptism of the Ethiopian Chamberlain thus narrated, great reliance is placed by the advocates of immersion; and this is perhaps as favourable an instance in support of their theory as can be given. Here, it is said, is an instance of an individual going down *into* the water to receive baptism, and coming up *out* of the water when the rite is finished. But even if this version were admitted, it would fall short of the required proof, as it is possible to go into the water and not be immersed. Had pouring been the mode in which the ordinance was administered, the same form of narrative might with equal propriety have been adopted. A person might go down into the water when the object was only to affuse or sprinkle him; and this he would almost certainly do, if the place selected for the operation was a stream in the East by a public highway. Besides, the very same thing is said of Philip that is said of the eunuch. One action is ascribed to both. If the latter went into the water, so did the former; and if this implies immersion in the one case, it cannot imply less in the other. And, again, the prepositions *εἰς* and *ἐκ*, though often meaning *into* and *out of*, have frequently the sense of *to* and *from*, and may with undeniable correctness be represented by these particles, save where the necessity of the passage obviously demands the former. But no such necessity exists in the present case,

* Acts viii. 36, 38, 39.

unless it can be maintained, on independent grounds, that to baptize denotes "to dip and nothing but to dip." Here, however, the verb is not in question. *Eis*, says Robinson, —and he confirms his statement by references to Winer, Passow, and others,—“governs the accusative, with the primary idea of motion *into* any place or thing, and then also of motion or direction *to* any place, thing, &c. The antithesis is expressed by *ἐκ*.” The exact meaning of the preposition depends upon its connexion. According to the verb with which it is construed, it signifies direction *to* an object or entrance *into* it. In the passage under review the verb is *καταβαίνω*, *to go down*, and is followed equally by both prepositions, as the sense of the passage may require. When Plato, in the very first line of his Republic, says, *Κατέβην χθὺς εἰς Πειραιᾶ μετὰ Γλαύκωνος τοῦ Ἀρίστωνος*, “Yesterday I went down to the Piræus, with Glaucon, the son of Ariston,” *to* and not *into* is manifestly the preferable reading. It is thus also in a variety of places in the New Testament: “He went down *to* Capernaum;” “the way that goeth down from Jerusalem *to* Gaza;” “they came down *to* Troas;” “he went down *to* Antioch,”* &c. &c. *Ἐκ*, the antithetical preposition, takes its particular signification from *ἐκ*, and is rendered *from* or *out of*, as the other is translated *to* or *into*. Instances of its use in this sense are of constant occurrence. Giving, then, to the words of the sacred historian, as with the exactest grammatical propriety we may give, the following version, “And they both went down to the water, Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they came up from the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried away Philip;” there is nothing in the passage to countenance immersion more than sprinkling, the syntax affording as much proof of one as of the other.

* John ii. 12. Acts viii. 26. xvi. 8. xviii. 22. xxv. 26.

From these remarks it is obvious that the mode of the eunuch's baptism cannot certainly be determined from the mere terms of the narrative. It must therefore be judged of, if at all, from the circumstantial probabilities of the case. And these, we think, furnish evidence of which, though the general amount is small, the balance appears decidedly against immersion.

Two individuals meet on a public road, the one an African Jew of high consideration returning from the feast at Jerusalem, the other a newly appointed deacon of the primitive Church. The former is sitting in his chariot, reading in Isaiah a prophecy concerning Jesus Christ; the latter is on foot, and, directed by the Spirit, accosts him with the inquiry, "Understandest thou what thou readest?" "How can I," replies the Treasurer of Candace, "unless some man guide me?" Seizing the happy opportunity, Philip expounds the mysterious text, and preaches from it the truth as it is in Jesus. The word takes effect, the Chamberlain is won to Christ, and desires to be recognized as a disciple. Coming to a certain water he asks, "What doth hinder me to be baptized." And stepping out of the chariot, the rite is immediately performed. There is no delay, no apparent difficulty, no preparation involving a change of raiment, no hesitation founded on the public character of the place, no intimation that the *τι ὕδωρ*, *some water*, is a river, a pool, or any collection of water sufficient for the dipping of the whole person, or if sufficient proper to be used for the purpose. The baptism is so simple that, as soon as water is met with, no further hindrance exists to its administration. It is such that a nobleman of great authority under an African monarch can step out of his carriage and receive it, by the side of a public road, at a considerable distance from home, without any previous

anticipation, and with no conveniences but what belong to his travelling equipage. It is such also that a Christian teacher can administer it under purely casual circumstances, when walking alone on the highway, and in his ordinary dress; and from which, on its completion, he can, without any change of raiment, be carried away by the Spirit of the Lord. It is such therefore as to suggest, not to say demand, a very different operation from that of dipping. This operation possesses no correspondence whatever with the actual incidents of the case. It lacks all the elements of convenience and propriety, facility and delicacy, which the occasion seems imperatively to call for; and, consequently, must give place to another mode which, because it presents higher adaptations, commends itself by a greater probability.

St. Paul's baptism appears to have taken place in a private house, in which we are not at liberty to say there was a bath large enough for immersion. Moreover, it occurred while the Apostle was sick both in body and mind. He had fasted three days and nights, had been deprived of sight and deeply agonized in spirit, and was necessarily in a state of great feebleness and exhaustion; but as soon as Ananias commanded, he rose from his couch, and was baptized.* There was no hindrance, for Ananias inquired, "Why tarriest thou?" There was little scruple and less ceremony, for even food was not administered until the rite was performed. We can scarcely suppose that in such circumstances dipping would have been safe, or if safe, would have been so described.

The baptism of Cornelius and his kinsmen supplies a third illustration, and may be dismissed with almost the same brevity as the last. "Because that on the Gentiles

* Acts ix. 18. xxii. 16

also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost, Peter said, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we."* The connexion of baptism with the pouring out of the Holy Spirit in this passage is not unworthy of notice, as the mode ascribed to one may be deemed suggestive of the mode proper to the other. Baptism is emblematical of the gift of the Holy Ghost, and the fact that the latter had been imparted was with the Apostle a reason that the former should not be withheld. The reality had been given; why should the emblem be denied? The Spirit had been *poured out*; why not the like operation be performed with water? That some such association of ideas was in the Apostle's mind seems all but certain from the inquiry, "Can any man *forbid water*, that these should not be baptized?" This is certainly not the form into which his thought would have shaped itself had immersion been intended. The action of the verb *forbid* would have passed directly to the subjects rather than to the element of baptism, and the challenge would have been, "Can any man forbid these to be baptized?" or, "can any man forbid the immersion of these?" To prohibit water is to withhold it, to disallow its introduction for the purpose specified; as to prohibit an individual is to restrain him in the action or to keep him from the object he contemplates. The verb in such connexion belongs always to the person or thing forbidden, and is so construed in every instance of its occurrence in the New Testament. It is thus when our Lord says of little children, "Suffer and *forbid them* not to come unto me;" also when the eunuch inquires, "What doth *hinder me* to be baptized?" and yet again when Peter, justifying his procedure in this very admission of Gentiles to Chris-

* Acts x. 47

tian baptism, demands, "What was I that I could *withstand God*?" So in the passage before us, the prohibition has reference immediately to the water, and not to Cornelius and his friends. "Can any man *forbid water*," asks the Apostle; which directly implies, not that the individuals who had received the gift of the Spirit were to be conducted to the water and plunged in it, but that the water was to be brought to them, and in some convenient manner employed in their baptism.

A further illustration is given in the case of Lydia. "On the Sabbath day we went out of the city by a river side, where prayer was wont to made; and we sat down, and spake unto the women who resorted thither. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there."* From this narrative it appears that Lydia was a woman of devout character, and of some worldly consideration. With others of her own sex, she had retired from the city to a kind of rural oratory, a place for prayer, by a river side, to which the pious Jews at Philippi were accustomed to repair to perform the ablutions required by the law, and to worship the God of their fathers. Here she heard the Gospel, felt its power, and was forthwith baptized. As in other examples, the mode of baptism is a matter of inference and not of proof. The mention of a river side determines nothing, implies nothing. The locality is specified not for its supply of water, but for the religious use to which it was devoted. Moreover, it was the place at which the Apostle met with

* Acts xvi. 13, 14, 15.

Lydia, not the one to which he led her for the purpose of baptizing her.

Now what in this instance is the judgment of candid and unbiassed reason? Can it, with any just regard to probability, be maintained that Lydia was immersed? Is this the mode which a sense of propriety and a knowledge of Asiatic delicacy would suggest as the most likely to be observed? Is it conceivable that a matron of respectable social position should, in a place of public resort, and with no other preparation than what was accidental to a casual visit to a river side, submit to be immersed by a man, and before the gaze of as many of both sexes as might happen to be present? Or is it likely that, under the circumstances, such a trial of feminine delicacy would be proposed by an Apostle, whose mind was so severely pure that he thought it a shame for a woman to pray unveiled, and absolutely forbade the Corinthian women to appear in a public assembly uncovered? A greater improbability cannot well be imagined. It is not only more likely, but almost the only possible supposition, that the rite resembled in mode those ceremonial purifications, to which Lydia and the devout Jews at Philippi had been accustomed at this consecrated spot, and to afford convenience for which the immediate neighbourhood of a running stream had been selected as the place for prayer.

The baptism of the jailor and his family strengthens the argument by an additional example. Having in the exercise of their ministry incurred the displeasure of the Philippian magistrates, Paul and Silas were cruelly beaten, and thrust into the inner prison. But though troubled on every side, they were not distressed; though perplexed, they were not in despair. Deprived of their liberty they were still *free*, free with the freedom of the truth and of Christ.

Their piety accompanied them to their cell, and, as if quickening to increased activity by the narrow sphere to which it was confined—glowing with an intenser heat by the greater concentration given to its living coals—it burst forth, like sunshine kindling through a storm, or like the flush of vernal life in the midst of a tropical winter, into a spontaneous rapture of supplication and of song, which turned the miserable dungeon into the house of God and the gate of heaven. The thick walls of the prison rang with their praises, and midnight bore upward on its dark wing their prayer to God. God heard, and answered them in His might. A great earthquake smote the prison to its foundations, and, untwisting their fetters, set the prisoners at liberty. Aroused and alarmed, the jailor first drew his sword, and meditated self-destruction; but afterwards, assured by the voice of Paul, he sprang in, and finding the Apostles not only safe but calm and cheerful, generous and gentle even, he became agitated with other emotions than those which first distressed him. The fear of temporal calamity gave place to apprehensions of spiritual danger; and falling down before Paul and Silas he inquired, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” His inquiry was soon answered. The imprisoned Apostles “spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway.”*

Now it is to be observed that this baptism was that of a whole family, including, probably, various ages and both sexes. It took place at midnight, within the precincts of the prison, before the jailor had invited the Apostles into his house or refreshed them with food, and immediately on

* Acts xvi. 32, 33.

the word of the Lord being preached to him. There is no retirement to another place spoken of, no delay indicated, no preliminary arrangement suggested, no outward preparation of any kind supposed. All is done on the spot, *at the same hour of the night*, and *straightway*. The jailor washed the stripes of the Apostles, and the Apostles baptized the jailor. The two circumstances are told in the same breath, with the same simplicity of narrative, and as occurring in close connexion with each other. All this is quite intelligible on the supposition that sprinkling was the mode adopted, as this is perfectly natural and congruous to the circumstances of the case; but it requires a logic of keen analysis, or an imagination of singular fertility, to discover in the history the slightest trace of evidence that the jailor and his family were immersed. Adjournment to a river side can be suggested only on the principle, that no difficulties can weigh against the antecedent certainty of immersion. On the same principle it is not impossible to call up the vision of a tank or cistern in the prison yard, and used for the general purposes of the inmates; and to picture the jailor and his household plunged into it, one after another, and then returning dripping and shivering to the house, from which they had so lately issued in consternation and affright. But seriously to propose either hypothesis is, if not to trifle with the word of God, yet to abuse our reason by giving us possibility for testimony, and fancy for argument. Even imagination requires some material out of which to fashion its theories, and a love for truth demands that its flights shall be restricted within the range of at least apparent probability. But in the account of the jailor's baptism, there is not a single circumstance which can be refined and elaborated into a proof that he and his *children* were immersed. All the evidence inclines and

carries us forward to an opposite conclusion. The singularity of the hour, the extraordinary character of the place, the assumed difference in age and sex of the parties, the rapid sequence of events, all that the evangelist records and all that his narrative implies, unite to claim for the ceremony in this case the simplest and most convenient form in which water can be applied.

It is unnecessary to extend the discussion by adding other instances, especially as those which remain furnish similar evidence, and support the same conclusion. The result of the whole inquiry is this:—That the mode of Christian baptism is of comparatively inferior moment, as the Spirit of God has no where defined it with such precision as to make one particular form essential to the validity of the rite; that as the Gospel is intended for all nations and all people, it is antecedently improbable that the administration of this ordinance would be restricted to a mode which, in respect to climate, individual constitution, and the requirements of a purified social intercourse, possesses but a partial adaptation and a questionable propriety; that the word to baptize has a general and not a particular signification, describing the *accomplishment* of an object rather than the *manner* of its accomplishment, an act rather than the kind of action, and may, according to its connexion in a sentence, mean to flood or to sink, to dip, to pour, or to sprinkle; that in some cases it is used where there was demonstrably no immersion, in some where immersion is expressly excluded, in a third class where, while from the spirituality of the operation mode is naturally inconceivable, immersion by figure is out of all agreement with the truth suggested or the circumstances described, and yet again where, from its construction with the dative of the instrument, as well as from the peculiar tropical character of the instrument itself—as in the

promised baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire—the mode required is one in which the baptizing element is brought upon the subject, and not the subject plunged into the baptizing element; that in the baptisms of John there is nothing in the choice of Jordan and Ænon to balance the improbability, that one individual in a few months immersed the inhabitants of “Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,” and the still further improbability that these vast multitudes, of both sexes, submitted to the rite in each other’s presence, and without any preparation or convenience for it but what the accident of the hour supplied; and, finally, that in the instances of Apostolical baptism recorded in the Acts, there is no ground real or apparent for the assumption, that the first converts to Christianity were initiated into the kingdom of God by dipping, except the use of certain prepositions which, as far as they have authority at all, lend equal support to every form of administration, while the characteristic incidents of the several examples are such as to establish by the strongest presumptive evidence, that the mode actually adopted was either pouring or sprinkling.

Before concluding this chapter, it is necessary to refer to an objection of much plausibility, founded on the supposed allusion to the mode of baptism in Rom. vi. 3, 4, and Col. ii. 12. “Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into (his) death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” — “Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who *hath* raised him from the dead.” These verses are regarded by the friends of immersion as an inspired exposition

of the mode of baptism. Some even—of great critical celebrity—not Baptists by profession, have accepted them as proof that dipping was commonly practised in the time of the Apostles. “I value the evidence of these passages so highly,” says Dr. Carson, “that I look on them as perfectly decisive. They contain God’s own explanation of his own ordinance.” This is the general sentiment of the Baptist community. Hence the passages are in frequent use, and, it must be confessed, of considerable popular effect. No other Scriptures, save perhaps those which take us to Jordan and Ænon, perform the same amount of practical service to the Baptist cause. And no wonder, since, from the striking peculiarity of the figure employed, the imagination is gained before the judgment is informed. Metaphor is more attractive than criticism, and less perplexing than argument. “Burial with Christ in baptism” impresses the fancy at once, but the actual import of the phrase, as determined by its connexion, becomes apparent only after patient inquiry.

The position assumed is this, that baptism is viewed by the Apostle as an emblematical representation of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ; from which the inference is claimed, that immersion being the only form consistent with the image, is the only mode appropriate to the rite. We dispute the premises, and, for this reason, disown the conclusion.

Figurative language is not an arbitrary sign, to be construed as caprice may dictate. It is the voice of imagination giving utterance to its perceptions of material and spiritual analogies. The propriety of the figure, therefore, depends upon its power of suggestion, that is, upon the degree of its resemblance to the object it is meant to illustrate or symbolize. *If the resemblance is imperfect, the figure is inapt;*

if it cannot be seen, there is properly no figure at all. How is this condition met in the case before us ?

In the first part of the supposed representation, there is not the slightest trace of resemblance. "Know ye not," says the Apostle, "that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death ?" This is the principal fact affirmed, from which burial with Christ is afterwards deduced as a logical consequence. "*Therefore* we are buried with him." We are buried with him because put to death with him. Death must precede burial both in fact and in figure. But where is the symbolic likeness of baptism by any mode, especially of baptism by dipping, to the death of the Son of God ? What points of correspondence can be discovered, by the most susceptible and delicate fancy, between immersion and crucifixion ? If expiring on the cross be the antitype, how can plunging into water be the type ? Let it not be said that the sufferings of Christ are spoken of as floods, or that his death is called a baptism. Each of these is an emblem itself, and cannot, according to the proprieties of language, be represented by another emblem. A figure of a figure is a rhetorical absurdity.

Nor does immersion bear a much greater resemblance to the burial of Christ, supposing, indeed, we were justified in seeking in the inference what cannot possibly be found in the premises. Were we even to take the modern custom of interment instead of the ancient, and substitute the English for the Jewish, we should find but little congruity between the symbol and the fact. The baptistery of certain churches may be formed to resemble a grave, but he must be gifted with an extraordinary imagination who can discover a likeness between a grave and Jordan or Ænon. *And what is there in the momentary operation of dipping*

the living into water, to suggest the solemn act of committing the dead to the earth? Or in the formulary adopted in the one service, to remind us of the language and spirit appropriate to the other? If baptism is a scenic exhibition of burial, dipping presents as little analogy to it as any other mode.

But we are not permitted to make the substitution. The burial of Christ, and not an English funeral solemnity, is the fact symbolized in baptism. And how was Jesus buried? Not according to our custom, but "as the manner of the Jews is to bury." He was not let down into the earth, but placed in a chamber hewn out of the rock, the opening of which was secured by a great stone rolled against it and sealed. By what conceivable association of ideas could an interment of this kind call up in the mind of the Apostle the process of dipping a person in water? Or how, whether on the ground of cultivated taste, or as a dictate of Divine inspiration, could the one be thought of and used as a type of the other? It seems difficult to answer this question, and the difficulty is not lessened by the transfer of the scene from Jerusalem to Rome, and the substitution of burning for embalming. In the passage under consideration the Apostle is addressing the Romans, whose custom it was to burn their dead, and deposit the ashes in an urn,—to which solemnity baptism by immersion, or indeed by any mode, offers as little resemblance as it does to burial. In short, only let it be required in a symbol that it shall exhibit some obvious likeness to the thing it is intended to represent, and then baptism can never be construed into an emblem of the Saviour's burial. And if not of his burial, so neither of his resurrection.

Again. Baptism is the outward sign of an inward grace,

the visible symbol of a spiritual purification. Whatever other purpose it may answer, it serves as a standing monitor of our depravity, and a continual repetition of the promise of the Spirit to sanctify and cleanse us. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing of regeneration*, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." But how can this view of baptism be reconciled to that which makes it the emblem of burial? By what agreement of ideas, or consistency of figurative representation, can the ordinance be described as equally the symbol of washing and of interment? The two images may not be contradictory, but they are so dissimilar and incongruous as to be extremely difficult of association. "If we attempt to unite them," says Dr. Halley, "we have before us the ludicrous image of a man washing in a grave, or dying in a bath."

Still further. Tropical language, we have said, is the expression of analogies. But the analogy is not between one figure and another, but between figure and fact. Only that which is literal can be represented by that which is figurative. Every symbol must have for its absolute ground something which is not symbolic but real. If light symbolizes knowledge, no other figure in this connexion can symbolize light. "Sprinkling," says Dr. Carson, "cannot be an emblem of the sprinkling of the blood of Christ; because the blood of Christ is not literally sprinkled on the believer." How, therefore, on this principle, can baptism be a figure of the burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is meant by this figure? Not, surely, that the rite is a merely scenic *exhibition* of the veritable occurrences themselves, but an

emblematical representation of the burial and resurrection of the believer with Jesus Christ.* But where is the literal foundation on which the emblem must rest? What is the reality which gives propriety to the figure? The death and resurrection of the believer with Christ are themselves figures—mystical and not real. How then, since a figure cannot represent a figure, can baptism by immersion represent them? Let an individual, seeking to enter into the kingdom of God, be literally buried and raised with Christ, and his baptism may then be called a symbol of such facts; but let him be buried and quickened only emblematically, and the symbol is anticipated, the rite cannot figuratively set forth what is itself a figurative process.

The idea of immersion must be dismissed, if a just interpretation of the Apostle's words would be obtained. It gives us no conception of his meaning, and only darkens and confuses the whole subject of his discourse. In neither passage is the mode of baptism the question under consideration, and from neither can the mode be legitimately

* "Some Baptists declare that immersion is the sign of the death and burial of Christ himself. I am unwilling to ascribe this representation to any who do not themselves assert their faith in it, as I believe some of our Baptist brethren would disavow this opinion, if it were ascribed to them, or if their attention were seriously directed to its implications . . . But if the immersion of a person in water represent the burial of Christ, the person so immersed is proposed as the representative or emblem of the blessed Redeemer. Unless the man or woman immersed, so far as that service is concerned, represent Christ, there can be no emblematical representation of the burial of Christ. But is the baptized person to be considered as representing Christ to the spectators? Or is he to consider himself in the service as an emblem of Christ? If he be, this controversy on immersion assumes an awful importance. A man of like passions with ourselves, being put into the water, is proposed as a representation of Christ being laid in the tomb! I will recognise no man in that character. I will not so profane the immaculate person of the Saviour."—*Halley on the Sacraments*, 337, 338.

inferred. He who boasts that his mission was not to baptize but to preach the Gospel, was under no temptation to introduce, in the discussion of such weighty and interesting topics as those to which these passages refer, a matter of such inferior moment as the manner in which water should be applied when the rite is administered. Nor in truth does he. The question of mode was probably not in his thoughts; certainly it does not enter even by implication into his design. In the first passage, that in Rom. vi. 3, 4, his object is to vindicate the doctrine of gratuitous justification from the possible charge of licentiousness, and in both it is to assert the complete identification of the believer with Christ in his redeeming work. The believer is one with him in his death, being dead unto sin; in his burial, being separated from the present evil world; in his resurrection, being quickened with him, and made to walk with him in newness of life. The natural is the type of the spiritual; what took place really in the Saviour, is employed to represent what takes place spiritually in the Christian. Christ died, was buried, and rose again in the flesh; the believer dies, is buried, and rises again in the spirit. By a "fellowship of suffering" he passes through all the closing scenes of the Redeemer's humiliation, until he "is made to sit with him in heavenly places." The Apostle delights in such analogies, and sometimes pursues them almost to the verge of allegory. Crucifixion, death, quickening, newness of life, are terms ever recurring in his writings. They suit the boldness of his genius, while they proclaim the ardour of his affection. They are not in his case the flowers of fancy but the fruits of love—piety kindled into poetry—affirming with the greatest energy of language his absolute and perfect sympathy with the Son of God. Oneness with Christ *is the regal aspiration of his soul: a oneness in which self*

disappears in its object, is the expression in a single phrase of his full conception of Christian privilege and duty.

How is this oneness obtained? That is, how does the believer pass through changes which analogically correspond to the great redeeming acts of the Saviour's life? By what means is he "so comprehended in, and accounted one with Christ, as to have died in his death, been buried in his burial, and raised again in his resurrection?" By baptism, we are informed. But not surely by external baptism, unless we are prepared to accept the theory of baptismal regeneration as held by the Fathers, and, with little variation, perpetuated to our own times. If with them we believe that our Lord sanctified the water itself, and imparted to it some mysterious quality, by virtue of which the baptized person was purged from sin and replenished with grace, we are consistent in attributing to the ordinance the power of purifying the soul to a spiritual participation with Jesus Christ. But if not, then the only baptism by which we can be buried and raised again with him is the baptism of the Spirit, of which baptism with water is but the outward symbol. Identification with Christ in his death *must* be spiritual, as in no other sense is it conceivable. In the passage in Colossians resurrection with him is expressly described as such,—“wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God.” But if death and resurrection are spiritual, burial cannot be otherwise. Now a spiritual change demands a spiritual process, and a spiritual process a spiritual power. If baptism therefore is the process or the power, it must be the inward baptism of the Holy Spirit; which conclusion, indeed, is made the more certain by the fact that, not all who had received the outward rite are included by the Apostle in the spiritual benefit. The restrictive clause in Romans, “so many of us as

were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death," implies for the internal baptism a reference much within the limits of the external. They who were baptized into Christ were "dead to sin," "planted together in the likeness of his death," "crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth they should not serve sin." By this baptism they were spiritually conformed to Christ, partakers of his sufferings, dead in his death, buried in his burial, and raised again in his resurrection.

Besides, this spiritual interpretation of his words is the only one which gives a demonstrative force to the Apostle's reasoning. At the commencement of the chapter, Rom. vi. 1, he inquires, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?" He had established the doctrine of justification by faith, and to this gratuitous dispensation of pardon he supposes the objection, that its tendency must be unfavourable to holiness. With great emphasis he denies this tendency, and asserts the very opposite. "How shall we," he demands, "that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death: Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into his death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." Thus oneness with Christ, obtained by means of baptism, is the reason why justification by grace does not and cannot lead to licentiousness of life. All who are truly justified have become united to the Saviour in his death and resurrection, and by this union are "dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God." How then can they live any longer in that with respect to which they are dead? Crucified with Christ, the body of sin is destroyed; raised again with him, they walk

in newness of life. "Planted together in the likeness of his death," they are "also in the likeness of his resurrection." Now what is the baptism which is so mighty in its influence as to produce a result so eminently spiritual? It cannot surely be the outward baptism of water, but the inward baptism of the Spirit. Or if in any sense the former is referred to, it is not as an instrument but as an emblem, and not as an emblem of the Saviour's burial but of the sinner's purification. The ceremony is to be viewed in its meaning rather than its mode, as suggesting and including that "renewing of the Holy Ghost," of which "the washing of regeneration" is the outward and visible sign.

Thus understood, the argument is clear and forcible. We see at once, and with immediate conviction, how oneness with Christ in his death by means of baptism makes an end of sin, and renders a further continuance in it impossible. But how does this appear on the supposition that the Apostle designed to teach the mode of baptism, or that he employs it in defence of the doctrine he wishes to establish? What force is there in the reasoning, that a gratuitous forgiveness cannot depreciate the motives to virtue and strengthen the encouragement to sin, because the ceremony which introduces into the kingdom of God is an emblematical representation of the Saviour's entombment in the "sepulchre hewn in stone?" By what connexion of ideas does it follow, especially with the demonstration which such an argument requires, that a death unto sin is the consequence of justification by faith, *because* the immersion of a believer figuratively exhibits him as dead and buried with Christ? Immersion does not make him dead; nor does it, with any sufficient evidence of the fact, declare him so. And though it may perhaps imply a profession of deadness, with a promise

also of newness of life, yet, as it does not give, or positively affirm, the reality it is supposed to symbolize, it cannot be adduced as a proof that the person baptized is "dead indeed."

Thus the plea for dipping, as founded on the two passages in question, fails in every particular. No critical violence can coerce them into a single utterance in its favour. The term "buried," whatever its popular utility, is wholly destitute of argumentative value. Severed from its context, it may possibly suggest a resemblance between immersion and burial; but viewed in connexion with it, or according to the recognized conditions of figurative language, the fancied resemblance disappears in quite a different interpretation. The baptism of a believer in water and the entombment of the Saviour in a rock may be broadly contrasted, but they cannot, with any approach to similarity, be compared. If they could the resemblance would profit but little, as it could not be conciliated to that view of the rite, which makes it the emblem of spiritual purification. Supposing however this possible, a difficulty would still be found in that law of tropical language, which forbids that one figure shall be employed as the foundation of another. And even in the absence of this difficulty, an equally formidable one would present itself in the very structure and object of the Apostle's argument, as the supposed analogy between dipping and interment could not be made of so much avail in his reasoning, as to be of demonstrative force in his conclusion.

The only construction free from fatal objection is that which excludes from these texts the question of mode altogether, and considers the ordinance, if at all, in its purely spiritual import. The baptism which separates *from the world* by uniting with Christ in his death and

burial,—which gives the believer to “know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings,”—is neither immersion, nor sprinkling, nor any other determinate form of the outward rite, but that baptism of Divine influence which in spirit so identifies an individual with the Son of God in his redemptive acts, that with “a true heart” he can say ; “ I am crucified with Christ : nevertheless I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me : and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.” If the external ceremony has any place in the Apostle’s argument, it is as the emblem of this spiritual participation with Christ ; the sign is transferred to the thing signified, and used inclusively for both.

CHAPTER V.

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Baptism and the Lord's Supper, we have seen, are alike in some of their principal features. They have certain great points in common, combined and expressed under the general name of Sacraments, by virtue of which they can be associated in the same discussion, and presented in one view. But with general resemblances they have also characteristic differences, which require, in order to a just discrimination, that each be disunited from the other, and devoted to a separate consideration. Of Baptism *mode* and *subject* are the questions of most peculiar interest, and to these an ample share of attention has been awarded in the preceding chapters. Of the Lord's Supper there are several distinctive peculiarities calling for a special notice, and to these, before resuming topics common to both ordinances, a few remarks must now be given.

The Lord's Supper is distinguished from Baptism by the frequency with which it is to be observed. The latter is a declaratory and initiatory service, recognising the connexion of the subject with the covenant of Divine mercy, and giving him a visible introduction into "the household of God." Once performed it is performed for ever. There is nothing in it, as there was nothing in circumcision, which requires or even excuses a second observance. The declaration once made a renewal of it is unnecessary; the introduction once given a further initiation is superfluous:

in both cases the object is thoroughly accomplished, and for neither purpose therefore has the ceremony need to be repeated. But the Supper of the Lord is a rite of commemoration and profession, and thus contains in itself, independently of specific direction, the reason of an oft recurring celebration. It does not like the first sacrament stand at the threshold of the temple, and serve as the means of entrance into it, but it occupies its innermost recess and most holy place : there, as a centre of attraction, it associates believers in the same act of thankful remembrance and devout acknowledgment, and, as a sacred feast, invites and satisfies their infinite desires by giving them a spiritual participation with Christ as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world.

By the Church generally it has ever been held that the initiatory rite should be administered only once, but that the commemorative ordinance should be observed with periodic frequency. Their distinctive character requires this difference, as the terms themselves sufficiently indicate. Initiation is an act which completes itself, but commemoration is an exercise which admits of many recurrences of the same act. The word of God plainly supports this distinction. No instance is recorded of Christian baptism being twice administered, and no intimation is given that the necessity for such a repetition of the rite can ever occur. The command of our Saviour was that the Apostles should make disciples by baptizing ; which implies that the process was of value only for the object designed, and consequently ceased when this was attained. Baptism is called a birth by water, and a birth cannot, without a subsequent death, take place more than once. The recognised members of the Church are spoken of as *having been* baptized, as *having been* washed, as *already* circumcised with

the circumcision of Christ;* language which intimates that the service is past, that the intention of it is fully expressed, and, therefore, that the ceremony requires no second administration. "There is *one* baptism," and this is true equally of observance as of essence.

But the Lord's Supper is referred to in terms which imply an oft repeated celebration. It is spoken of as a present act and a permanent blessing. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" "We are all partakers of that one bread." The offering of thanks is *now* presented, the profession of love is *now* made; communion with the Saviour in his sufferings is not a *past* enjoyment but a present privilege. The first converts to Christianity after the gift of the Spirit, "were baptized," it is said, but "*continued* steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in *breaking of bread*, and in prayers." The Corinthians were accustomed to "*come together* into one place" professedly to "eat the Lord's Supper." In rehearsing the institution of the ordinance as communicated to him by special revelation, the Apostle reports as the words of our Lord, "This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, *as oft as ye drink it*, in remembrance of me;" while in the subsequent statement added by himself, "for *as often* as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," he clearly presumes the frequent observance of the rite by the primitive Church, and virtually enjoins it upon every society of believers, until the second appearing of Christ from heaven. How frequently the service should be administered is no where specified. This is one of those questions of subordinate

* Rom. vi. 3. Heb. x. 22. Col. ii. 11.

interest, which the Spirit has left to the collective judgment of individual churches.

The Lord's Supper is also distinguished from Baptism in its exclusive reference to adults. At an early period of the Church this limitation was exceeded by the admission to the service of infant children, under a false impression of the intrinsic and self-operating efficacy of the elements themselves. Interpreting literally the beautiful and profoundly significant discourse of our Lord in the sixth chapter of John's gospel, and, generally, either confounding the outward symbol with the spiritual reality, or viewing the former as only a vehicle of the latter, the Church teachers believed that the reception of the sacramental elements was necessary to salvation; and hence they extended the privilege of participation to all who had been baptized, giving only wine to those who were too young to eat bread.* This latter circumstance, perhaps, was one of the early departures from the original institution which led to a permanent separation of the elements. In the New Testament, however, as well as in the example of the primitive churches, there is a virtual and actual restriction of the service to those who are "come to years." And for this restriction it is almost superfluous to assign any reasons. A sufficient ground is presented in the nature and design of the ordinance itself. A commemorative solemnity demands a commemorating intelligence. The Lord's Supper is not a feast containing in its elements a secret virtue which flows out on the occasion of physical contact, but a symbolic service shewing the Lord's death till he come,—implying, in the individual partaking, a grateful recognition of the Saviour's sufferings as an atonement for sin, and a willingness

* Mosheim. Cent. iii. c. iv. 3. Neander. Vol. i. 461.—*Bohn*.

to trust in his merit for acceptance with God. Communion, therefore, is an eminently personal and voluntary act. It requires "senses exercised to discern both good and evil," and is possible only where the faculties are awakened to a self-conscious activity, and the will has become capable of free and intelligent volition.

The Lord's Supper further differs from Baptism in being a social ordinance: it is that in which "the communion of saints" is most completely realized. Baptism establishes an outward connexion with the universal Church, by making the person baptized a disciple of Christ; but the Lord's Supper, while presuming this general connexion, admits to the more limited and intimate fellowship of those who, because they "have been all made to drink into one Spirit," "are all baptized into one body." "Baptism, it seems evident from the New Testament, is not to be regarded as a *social* or *Church ordinance*. It did not, when administered to adults, introduce the persons baptized to connexion with any particular church, or society of Christians. They were simply baptized into the faith of Christ, and the general fellowship of the Gospel. We have one clear and decisive exemplification of this, in the case of the eunuch of Ethiopia. He was baptized by Philip in the desert, when on a journey, where there was, of course, no church; nor was there any where the eunuch was going. His baptism, therefore, merely recognised him as a professed disciple of Jesus, without constituting him a member of any particular Christian church. And so it was with others. The converts when baptized 'joined themselves,' whenever they had opportunity, 'to the disciples'; but their baptism was administered to them simply on a profession of their faith; it was previous to such union, and formed no part of the

services of the church with which they might subsequently unite.* The cases of Lydia and the jailor are additional examples; the former was baptized by a river side before in all probability a church was formed at Philippi, and the latter in a prison, when as yet no connexion with the Philippian Church, if already existing, could have taken place.

The Lord's Supper, on the other hand, is eminently social in its character, a service in which brethren commune together on the symbols of the Saviour's body and blood. While a pledge of Divine mercy and a profession of individual fidelity, it is also a solemn recognition of each other as members of Christ, and, consequently, in the language of St. Paul, as "one bread, and one body." Allowing, on the basis of Christian qualification, of fraternal communion with separate societies, it yet supposes, as the title to habitual participation, not only a general admission by baptism into the kingdom of God, but also an acknowledged connexion with those who by voluntary association have become a particular church, as by the sanctification of the Spirit they have been made "a peculiar people." In the first instance the privilege of partaking was confined to the Apostles. They were virtually the earliest Christian society, and were chosen as the foundation, Christ himself being the chief corner stone, on which the future Church was to be built. They were therefore present at the institution of the Supper, and received the memorials of his death from the Saviour himself. Afterwards the privilege was enjoyed by the church at Jerusalem. The thousands converted on the day of Pentecost "were added" to the num-

* *Wesley's Infant Baptism*, 135. To this statement I would add, that the converts were baptized not only "in a profession of their faith," but also when, under wise leaders of religious work, they seemed, for further instruction, to be committed disciples of Christ.

ber of disciples already existing, and then "were together," "continuing daily with one accord in the temple, . . . and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." On the visit of Paul to Troas, "the disciples came together upon the first day of the week to break bread;" and the Corinthians, we have seen, though under very mistaken views of the character of the rite, were accustomed to "come together into one place, to eat the Lord's Supper." In every case the table of the Lord, as when first spread by him, stood apart from the world in the deep seclusion of the church, and was visited by none but those who, "joined unto the Lord," were also associated in ordinary Christian fellowship.

The moral qualifications for communion could not, of course, fall short of those required as the conditions of membership. Considered as a personal act, the ordinance is a grateful commemoration of the sacrificial offering of the Son of God, a solemn declaration of entire dependance on him as the only Saviour of sinners, and an implicit avowal of faith in his second coming as the Judge of quick and dead. "Do this in remembrance of me," is the command; "ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," is the exposition. There must consequently be related and suitable dispositions of mind. On the very lowest appreciation, there must be either an actual participation with Christ as the living bread which came down from heaven, or an eager desire to enjoy it,—a knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins already obtained, or that godly sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. If Calvary is to be thought of, self-abasement and grief as the fruit of conscious guilt, or love and joy as the effect of calm assurance, must mingle in the reflection. If the past *is to be* remembered, it must be a past of suffering; if the

future is to be anticipated, it must be a future of glory ; and as Christ is the object of both, the suffering must be shared by fellowship, and the glory realized by hope. It is only thus as the Saviour comes into view, and is beheld with emotions which naturally awaken at his presence and gather round his cross, that the rite can be acceptably and profitably observed. If other sentiments prevail the sacred service is profaned. To approach the table of the Lord in a state of impenitence and unbelief, with indifference and insensibility, or even without the desire to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and to drink his blood, is to eat and drink unworthily, and to be guilty of the body and blood of our Lord—guilty, that is, of dishonouring the solemnity in which his death is symbolically set forth. “Let a man examine himself,” says the Apostle, “and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord’s body.”*

According to this instruction an acceptable participation in the Supper requires first a careful self-examination, and then a true discernment of the Lord’s body. Ignorance of

* 1 Cor. xi. 29. *Kρίμα*, in the margin, is rendered *judgment*, and this is a strictly literal translation. It signifies a condemnatory sentence, and by implication punishment. Rom. ii. 2. v. 16. Matt. xxiii. 14. *Damnation* is now restricted to the final punishment of the wicked. Formerly it had a more general application. It cannot be used in this sense here, as, though the Corinthians did eat unworthily, the design of the Apostle’s counsel was to save them from this punishment. This was also the object of the judgment that was already inflicted upon them ; they were judged now, that hereafter they might “not be condemned with the world.” v. 32. The judgment they received was one of temporal calamity, as we learn from the verse succeeding that under notice : “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep”—that is, are dead. The word not unfrequently signifies temporal punishment. Rom. xiii. 2. 1 Pet. iv. 17. The general meaning is, that an unworthy participation at the Lord’s table involves guilt—condemnation—punishment.

self will lead to unworthiness of service. The attention therefore must be directed inward, and the counsels of the heart be made manifest; all the chambers of imagery where it is possible for evil to hide itself must be explored, and their darkness expelled by the entrance of that word which giveth light; the motives and affections must each be examined and estimated with scrupulous fidelity; the whole character must be analysed to its several elements, and submitted, with "the candle of the Lord" shining full upon it, to a searching scrutiny and a just award. Only thus will a due preparation for the sacred observance be obtained; only thus will mistaken apprehensions of its nature be avoided. The knowledge of self resulting from this inquiry will develop a sense of spiritual need, and this again, increasing to a desire which "hungers and thirsts after righteousness," will qualify for a deeper acquaintance with Christ, and hence for a close communion with him at his table. No probability of serious error will exist in connexion with this state of feeling. The gross conceptions of the Corinthians, and the still stranger delusions of the Romanists, will be impossible. The ordinance will stand out in its characteristic and beautiful simplicity. Faith, quickened by the previous discipline to a higher sensibility, will readily "discern the Lord's body." Thus discerned the service will also be enjoyed. A commemoration of facts will pass into an experience of grace. As the scenes of Calvary grow upon the view, the love of Christ will move upon the heart. The memorials of his passion will become the signs of his presence, and a profound and blissful consciousness will attest the truth of the words—"Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

The mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper demands a

brief attention. And by mode we now mean not the mere act of giving and receiving, but the distribution of the same elements equally to all. On this the instruction is so plain that nothing short of wilfulness can mistake it, and the example so impressive that nothing less than arrogance would depart from it. Among the several branches of the Protestant Church one rule invariably prevails. The ordinance is uniformly administered in two kinds, bread and wine, as the instituted symbols of the Saviour's body and blood. But the Roman Church restricts the privilege of a *whole* communion to the ministering priesthood, and permits only a mutilated abridgment of it to the people. The former may, nay *must*, commemorate the death of the Son of God in both kinds, but the latter in one alone. *They* are obliged to memorialize the shedding of his blood by only eating bread. This mutilation of the Sacrament is one of the many proofs of the deep apostacy of that Church, especially of that usurpation of authority by which it has "exalted itself above all that is called God." It is a bold and flagrant departure from the simple terms of its institution, a reckless and inexcusable innovation on the practice of Apostolic and subsequent times, and a virtual substitution of the decrees of popes and councils for the clear announcements of the word of God.*

* This is the more manifest from the circumstance, that the Church claims and, therefore, exercises the power to give or withhold the cup at its pleasure. At the Council of Basle, in the fifteenth century, the use of the cup was conceded to the Bohemians, who, after the martyrdom of Huss and Jerome, had broken out into open revolt, on the condition of their reconciliation to the Holy See. And still later, at the Council of Trent, it was "referred to our most holy lord," the pope, to grant at his discretion, the use of the cup to any nation or kingdom desiring it.—At what precise period the withholding of the cup commenced, it cannot with certainty be stated. Bishop Jewel affirms that no trace of the practice is found during the first six centuries of the Church.—*Sermon preached at*

The Sacred Supper is a Christian ordinance only as it is complete and entire. It ceases to be Christian as it lacks anything which Christ ordained. Division destroys its unity, and abridgment robs it of its meaning. Mutilation not only impairs its efficiency, but changes its character. It cannot materially differ and yet substantially resemble; it cannot be the same thing and yet not the same, at the same time. If not the Supper established by our Lord, it cannot be the Lord's Supper. But administered in only one kind, it is not the Supper which he instituted. Bread and wine were equally given and equally received, and no theory of sacramental virtue will convert difference into identity. No one part can be considered as the whole. If it can, that which is omitted must be unnecessary; and if unnecessary now, it must have been so at the beginning.

The entire Supper, as first instituted, and not a fragment of it, refers to the death of Christ. The fact of his death is proclaimed and exhibited in its true character and import, only as the unmutated rite is observed. Every separate element has a specific import, and no part can be excluded without irreparable injury to the original idea. Whoever therefore claims an interest in the fact, claims on the same ground a right to the whole service. The privilege of a perfect feast, accompanies faith in an all-sufficient sacrifice. But the sacrifice of Christ has no relation to the priesthood which it does not bear to the people. Nor, con-

St. Paul's Cross. Waddington, in his *Church History*, says: "It may be ascribed, without any great error, to the beginning of the thirteenth century." P. 691. It was at the Council of Constance, which condemned to the flames John Huss and Jerome of Prague, that the communion in one kind obtained the force and authority of law. There was a sort of rough propriety in this. The act of condemnation and the desire of spoliation were worthy to go together. The cruelty which put piety to death was fitly attended by the injustice which deprived faith of its right.

sequently, has the feast established in connexion with it. All have equally the same interest in the event which the Supper, in its completeness and integrity, is designed to shew forth. All then must be equally entitled to the Supper itself in the full supply of its essential elements. In the absence of a peculiar relation to the Saviour's death, there cannot be a peculiar claim to communion with him at his table. And hence the right to enjoy the *whole* ordinance is not personal but common, not ministerial but Christian. Retrenchment in any case is a virtual acknowledgment of excess or defect; the priest has more than enough, or the people less than is required.

It avails nothing to say, as the Council of Trent says, "that although our Redeemer, in that last Supper, instituted, and delivered to the Apostles, this sacrament in two species, yet that Christ whole and entire, and a true sacrament, are received under either species alone; and that therefore, as appertaineth unto the fruit thereof, they who receive one species alone, are not defrauded of any grace necessary to salvation." Nor does it add much to the weight of this statement, that the denial of it is rewarded with one of the many anathemas, of which "this holy synod" had so large a supply.* The learned doctors do not say that as much grace is communicated under one species as under two, but that there is no loss of any that is "necessary to salvation." How much may be necessary for this they do not inform us, but if more may be obtained by a whole than a half communion, there is a fraud committed on the recipient of the half to the extent of the grace he fails to receive. The statement itself is founded on the doctrine of transubstantiation. The venerable Council has decreed, with the customary anathema against

* Sess. xxi. Chap. iii. Can. 2.

opponents, that after consecration, the bread and wine of the Eucharist are transmuted into the body and blood of our Lord, yet so that, while the body exists under the species of bread, and the blood under the species of wine by the force of the words, both exist under the species of either, by virtue of that natural relation to each other which makes the parts of our Lord but one person. So that Christ whole and entire is received alike under one kind and under two, by either element separately, or by both combined. Division is thus the same as unity, and unity is one with division. Of the cup they make the bread, of the bread the cup; of one they make both, of both they make one. But admitting all this, enormously preposterous as it is, why should there be two species at all? If each when converted contains the other, why the superfluous provision? If a single element contains a whole Christ for the people, does it contain less for the priest? Or is a whole Christ insufficient for his desire? If the consecrated bread becomes the "Living Bread," the divine nourishment and life of the soul, can more than this be needed or looked for? If it can, ought not so great a blessedness be made a common enjoyment? Besides, was the Saviour ignorant of his own institution? Did he not know that the transmuted bread included his entire person? Did he not, nevertheless, "institute, and deliver to the Apostles, this sacrament in two species," accompanying the gift of the cup with the emphatic command, "Drink ye *all* of it?" True none but the Apostles were present, and to them the words were addressed; but if this is to be pleaded as a ground for withholding the cup from the people, it may with equal force be urged as a reason for depriving them of the bread.

It is singular, since, at the institution of the Supper, the

right and duty of all to drink of the wine were formally recognised, that the cup should be selected for retrenchment rather than the bread. In this the assumption is the more conspicuous, as the wrong, if possible, is the more flagrant. From the beginning the shedding of blood has had a marked connexion with the idea of atonement. It was this which gave the greater value to Abel's sacrifice, and made it more acceptable than the offering of his brother. The first testament, the Apostle tells us, was not dedicated without blood: "For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission."*

The Old was only a prophecy of the New, and the first testament a preparation for the second. For "Christ," the Apostle further informs us, "being come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us."† Blood has a special reference to atonement, and is commonly used in connexion with sacrifice. The shedding of the Redeemer's blood is constantly spoken of with marked and peculiar emphasis. It is a circumstance singled out as important in itself, and otherwise than as a mere accident of his death. It is that by which his death as a propitiation for sin is most frequently and significantly described. The.

* Heb. ix. 18, 22. † v. 11, 12.

phrase indeed has passed so thoroughly into the language of sacrifice that blood is identified with the oblation itself, and is employed for that which the shedding of it is only the means of effecting. "Ye are bought with a price—with the precious blood of Christ;" "whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood;" "in whom we have redemption through his blood;" "being justified by his blood;" "unto him that washed us from our sins in his own blood." Our Lord might have died a violent death without shedding his blood, but it is noted as a fact worth recording, by the only disciple who witnessed his crucifixion, that out of his side flowed blood and water; intimating, perhaps, that the second covenant bore the same kind of seal, though with the additional characters of Divinity impressed upon it, as that which gave validity to the first. And by the same disciple it is affirmed and repeated with emphatic particularity, that "Jesus Christ came by water and blood; not by water only, but by water and blood."

Now the cup in the Eucharist has a special relation to the shedding of the Saviour's blood. That which is exalted to a peculiar significance in his death, is that which the wine is designed pre-eminently to set forth. The connexion between them was formally established by Christ himself. "This cup," said he, "is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you." And participation in this cup is expressly called by the Apostle, "the communion of the blood of Christ." As redemption then is by the death of Jesus, with a particular reference to the shedding of his blood, and as the shedding of his blood is that circumstance in his death which the cup is intended distinctively to represent, to deny the cup is, if possible, a more conspicuous wrong than would be the withholding of the bread. The cup is that which appeals with

the most immediate interest to the faith, which the faith most readily takes hold of and interprets, as it is that which speaks directly and impressively of "the blood shed for many for *the remission of sins*." It is therefore that element in the Supper to which the right of believers is, if not the strongest in fact, yet the least doubtful in appearance, and not the strongest in fact only, because, the ordinance being one, a plurality of claims cannot exist, nor a difference of right be conceived.

Weak and foolish are the pretences for refusing the cup; *reasons* they cannot, without an abuse of language, be called. They are so completely self condemnatory, that the only refutation of them needed is to mention them. They are given for the most part by Gerson, "the oracle of the council of Constance," where the outrage was first authoritatively and legally committed, in his work against the heresy of admitting the laity to communicate in two kinds.* The wine, or rather blood of our Lord, cannot, he says, be carried about without danger: it might be spilt upon the ground: required for cases of emergency, as for the sick and dying, it must be kept in readiness, and kept, it would lose its quality, turning sour or breeding insects: in some countries wine is scarce, and difficult to be obtained: many people cannot endure the taste of it, and others, if permitted to drink out of a common cup, would pollute it with their long beards, or with some contagious disease. Most of these pleas are adopted by the Catechism of the Council of Trent, and are, no doubt, what the Council calls "just causes and reasons." But to these the Catechism adds yet another, which it describes as "a circumstance of the utmost importance:" it is, that "means were to be adopted to uproot the heresy which denied that Christ, whole and

* See Bishop Jewel's Controversy with Harding, p. 231. Parker Soc.

entire, is contained under either species, and asserted that the body is contained under the species of bread without the blood, and the blood, under the species of wine without the body." This last reason is certainly admirable for its candour, and would very much excite our astonishment, did it not fall in so well with the known casuistry of the Church of Rome. It is not enough, it seems, when policy dictates or necessity obliges, to do evil that good may come. The maxim, that the end sanctifies the means, so variously exemplified in other instances, must be carried into the sphere of Christian institutes, and receive a bold and striking illustration in the paring down and virtual setting aside of a Divine enactment. A certain dogma has been promulgated on Church authority, and must be pressed into universal acknowledgment. A human interpretation of words employed in the institution of the Eucharist is to be supported against and to the extinction of every adverse judgment; and to secure this result the more surely, the ordinance itself must be mutilated, and the command of its Founder abridged and broken. So that, supposing the interpretation to be correct, injury is done to a sacrament that supremacy may be given to a truth; but if not, as common sense and Scripture combine to affirm, the authority of Jesus is practically overborne to vindicate a doctrine which he did not teach. Violence is thus the handmaid of error, and faith loses its privilege that reason may be crippled in its freedom.

The other pretences are almost too trifling to deserve a serious refutation. They are singular, however, for their admissions and implications, as well as for their follies. One supposes that the wine may become acid, and thus contradicts in effect the alleged conversion of it into the blood of *our Lord*. If there is danger of its turning to vinegar, it

must still be wine; and if by a natural process it may see corruption, it cannot by a supernatural power have become otherwise than it was. Another professes that in some countries wine is scarce and difficult to be had; but it is scarce only for the people, as the priest is forbidden to celebrate the Eucharist except in two kinds. Besides, a universal law cannot justly be founded on a partial necessity. Where the same conditions do not exist, it is wrong to compel the same privations. If in some regions (and the number is very small) the fruit of the vine is so rare that it can with difficulty be obtained, the effect of this scarcity in the abridgment of Christian communion should, at least, be restricted to the countries in which it is known to exist. Or if uniformity is desirable, it is surely much more consonant to the suggestions of piety and duty to extend to the few the privileges of the many, than to impose on the many the inconveniences of the few. A third pretext is one of fear lest the wine be shed, and a fourth one of tenderness lest the taste of some be offended. The former contemplates a casualty only just conceivable, the latter an exception very rarely to be met with. One denies the cup for a reason which might never occur, and the other denies it to all for a reason which applies to a very small number. A possibility is thus treated as a certainty, and an exception is exalted to a law.

To these "weighty and just reasons" others are added, professedly from the word of God. A few Scriptures are put to the rack, and tortured into an utterance which Roman theology interprets as an approval of its heresy. Because in the sixth chapter of John no mention is made of the cup, and our Lord says, "if a man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever," it is inferred that the Sacrament may be administered under the species of bread alone. It is

certainly difficult to see the logical necessity of this conclusion. But if there is any force in it at all, the force is not expended on the people, but passes equally to the priesthood. The statement of Jesus Christ is far too broad, and on a subject too personally important, to admit of any exception. If for the laity it is true that, "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever," it is, happily for them, not less so for the clergy; and hence, the reasoning which from this declaration would justify a divided communion for the former, would establish also the propriety of a similar communion for the latter. But then, from the very same chapter, and on the same principle of interpretation, it might be demonstrated that a reception of both elements was necessary; for he who uttered the above words, almost immediately added, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." Flesh and blood must both be taken, and as these are given in the transmuted bread and wine, each must be administered to make the required condition complete. The fact however is, that, except by accommodation and congruity of sentiment, the discourse of our Lord has no reference whatever to the Eucharist. It was delivered a considerable time before the institution of his Supper, and was founded on no particular allusion to his death. His language is highly but most suggestively figurative, and its meaning is adequately expressed in the view which applies it to those inward affections of faith and love, by which, in an eminently spiritual sense, his "flesh becomes meat indeed, and his blood drink indeed."

An additional reason is found in the omission of wine in the account given in the second of Acts of the early communion of the Christian Church, and a still further one in the *alleged* example of the Saviour himself, in his interview

with the two disciples at Emmaus. Respecting the first, it is sufficient to observe, that the mention of only one kind does not by any fair inference exclude the presence of the other, as the "breaking of bread" might by synecdoche, be comprehensively used to express the whole ordinance ; but if it does, the exclusion extends as well to the Apostles as to the disciples, and, consequently, applies equally to the priest as to the people. As to the example of Christ, though pleaded, we are told, in justification of their restrictive decrees by the Councils of Constance and Basle, feeble must be the cause which requires such support. Supposing the breaking of bread in which the Redeemer was known to the two disciples at Emmaus was a sacramental and not a social supper, this would prove, if, as is probable, the disciples were of the seventy, that communion in one kind is not peculiar to the laity, but belongs also to the clergy ; and if Christ himself partook, as nothing but bread is spoken of, it would shew that such communion may be extended even to the ministering priest. But the supposition is altogether inadmissible. Nothing but fancy could suggest or necessity accept it. True the Saviour "took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to the disciples;" but this he did when he fed the five thousand men, besides women and children, yet no one will pretend that this was a sacramental service. In both cases the meal was one to satisfy the demands of nature. At the close of a day partly occupied in earnest conversation during a travel of several miles, Jesus is constrained by two disciples to enter a private house for refreshment and repose. Meat is set before them, and they recline at the table. There is no formal announcement, "This is my body," nothing to suggest a consecration of the food to purely religious purposes. Having previously won respect by his teachings and authority by his manner,

our Lord takes the place of the master of the feast, and pronounces the customary benediction. In this act the veil of secrecy is rent. By the position of eminence taken at the table, the peculiar tones of his voice in the utterance of the benediction, the prints of the nails in his hands made visible in the breaking and offering of bread, or by all these and other circumstances combined, he stands revealed as the risen Messiah, and, as soon as known, vanishes out of sight. All this is easy and natural on the theory that this was an ordinary repast, but inexplicable and incredible on any other supposition.

In truth, none of the reasons assigned for withholding the cup in the Lord's Supper are capable of producing intelligent conviction in a single mind. Instead of "just and weighty," they are not even specious and plausible. They are alike flimsy and absurd, imaginary in their premises, or illogical in their conclusions. But were they of greater merit than they are, the cup would still remain an essential part of the ordinance, and the inalienable right of the whole Church. The words of Christ are an everlasting safeguard of individual privilege, as they are also a perpetual memorial of individual duty. "Drink ye *all* of it," was his command, according to the version of Matthew; "And they *all* drank of it," was its fulfilment, according to the report of Mark.

With the terms of its institution agree the subsequent notices of the rite. Paul's account of it, founded on a special revelation, presupposes and requires the distribution of both elements, and his exposition of its meaning and design in the words, "For as often as ye eat this bread, *and drink this cup*, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," implies that both were given to the church at *Corinth*. The union of the two is so inseparable from his

conception of the Supper, that they appear in all his allusions to it. "The bread which we break—the cup of blessing which we bless;" "Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils;" "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord;" "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup;" "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself,"—this is the language in which the Apostle uniformly refers to the ordinance. He had obviously no idea of separation or retrenchment. He repeatedly particularizes each element singly, not as one contains the other, but as each is the complement of the other,—having a special signification by itself, and being essential to the completeness of the whole. And it is only, according to his view, as both are given and received, that an individual becomes in the fullest sense, "a partaker of the Lord's table."

A question has sometimes been raised, and invested with an importance transcending its merits, respecting the posture to be assumed in taking the Supper of the Lord. This, like the quality of the wine to be used, is undoubtedly a proper subject of inquiry, but is far too trifling to be made at any time a ground of separate communion. It is one of those matters which the Spirit of God seems to have left to the determination of particular communities, and in respect to which it is at least becoming in single individuals to conform to the general practice. Where precept or authoritative example is wanting (as the question in such cases is mostly one of very subordinate interest), the rule must obviously be supplied by the collective wisdom of a Christian society. In celebrating the Eucharist, sitting divides the custom of Protestant churches with kneeling; and

though neither has, strictly, anything more than ecclesiastical authority for its sanction, yet the former possesses a plea of Scriptural precedent which the latter cannot so clearly claim. The Supper, it is said by those who advocate a preference for sitting, is a social meal, "sanctified by the word of God and prayer." Though demanding the deepest sentiments of piety, it does not require the customary attitude of worship. Moreover, at its institution, it was taken in a sitting or recumbent posture, according to the mode uniformly observed at meals in the East. The example of Christ and his disciples ought to be followed, not only as an acknowledgment of their authority even in matters of form, but also as a visible protest against that idolatry of the Church of Rome which enjoins the adoration of the elements themselves. "Kneeling," says the redoubtable Thomas Cartwright, "carrieth a shew of worship, sitting agreeth better with the action of the Supper. Christ and his Apostles kneeled not." There is more than plausibility in these statements, there is a reason for the practice they are intended to support.

True it is replied by those who vindicate the propriety of kneeling, our Lord "sat down with the twelve," but not precisely as we are accustomed to sit, his posture being one of recumbency rather than of sitting. Besides, in this very circumstance he has countenanced a departure from the rigour of a Divine institution, as the Passover was ordained to be eaten standing, with all the outward appearances of haste; and has thus taught us that forms are not like principles, exempt from the possibility of change, but may be varied without any loss of their original substance and meaning. Again, it is urged, the Supper is certainly a feast, but a feast upon a sacrifice, and to be taken in a profoundly serious spirit. The eating and

Drinking required are but momentary operations, and are purely symbolical in their character. The merely social element is exalted and transfigured by the eminently religious. The whole service is one of deep spiritual import, and though the simple participation is not in itself an act of worship, it is yet connected with some of the most strenuous and purifying exercises of faith and love, being in fact the outward form of inward fellowship with the Father and the Son. The gesture of worship therefore cannot reasonably be condemned. Though not accordant with the name, kneeling is strictly appropriate to the nature of the ordinance, and attests, in a becoming expression, the devout and humble spirit in which it should be observed. It is no real concession to the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome, nor is it so regarded; and involves no greater deviation from the example of our Lord and his Apostles than does the celebration of the rite, though strictly denominated a Supper, at different hours of the day. "Our kneeling at Communion," says Hooker, "is the gesture of piety. If we did there present ourselves but to make some show or dumb resemblance of a spiritual feast, it may be that sitting were the fitter ceremony; but coming as receivers of inestimable grace at the hands of God, what doth better beseem our bodies at that hour, than to be sensible witnesses of minds unfeignedly humbled? Our Lord himself did that which custom and long usage had made fit; we that which fitness and great decency hath made usual."* This reasoning is at least a sufficient apology for kneeling; to which it may further be added that, apart from the fear of encouraging even in appearance the idolatrous custom of worshipping the host, the immediate suggestion of the religious sentiment would be to receive

* Eccles. Polity, B.v. lxviii. 3.

in the most grateful and reverent attitude the elements symbolical of the Saviour's passion.

It is remarkable that the reasons assigned for the two modes are not mutually antagonistic, much less mutually destructive. The justification of one is not inevitably the condemnation of the other. The question indeed is more one of preference than of absolute right or wrong, as, whatever mode is adopted, the decision is obtained rather on grounds of comparison than of opposition. The two modes may be practised in different communities, each on its own particular pleas, without any necessary impeachment of either, because the considerations which shew the propriety of one determine nothing against the other, except as they are thought to establish a balance of evidence in its favour. This is incidentally illustrative of the little importance that is due to "bodily exercise." A variety of ceremony does not affect the sameness of the service. The substance of the Sacrament remains notwithstanding a difference of position and gesture. Happily few are found to deny this. Even formalism itself, however rigorous its attachment to outward observances, never pretends that the validity of the rite is influenced by the posture assumed in its celebration. Sitting may be preferable to kneeling or kneeling to sitting,—the former may have the advantage of literal conformity, and the latter of reverential propriety,—but neither can be said to promote or prevent a true commemoration of the Saviour's death. The bread and the cup, however received, if taken in the spirit of humility and faith, constitute the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Differences of opinion may and ought to be allowed on a question so inferior as bodily gesture; the only requirement is that they be held in charity. Varieties of *practice* may without imputation be encouraged by particu-

lar Christian societies ;—the chief thing specially desirable being that, for the sake of decency and order, and still more for the sake of that beautiful oneness which the ordinance is designed to express, all the members of the same church should be united in observing the same forms.

“Because,” says Calvin, in a passage not unsuitable to this connexion, “the Lord has faithfully comprehended and clearly made known in the sacred Scriptures the whole sum of true righteousness, and all that pertains to his worship, and whatever is necessary to salvation, he is in reference to these to be obeyed as sole Master. But because in matters of external discipline and ceremony he has not thought it needful to prescribe particularly what we ought to observe (for he foresaw that this would depend on the circumstances of the times, and knew that one form would not be suitable to all ages), it becomes us to have respect to those general rules which he has given, that according to them may be ascertained, what things the necessity of the Church requires to be enjoined for order and decency. Finally, since respecting these things he has given no instruction (because they are not necessary to salvation, and may be diversely accommodated to the edification of the Church, according to the manner and custom of every age and nation), that which is old may be abrogated and that which is new appointed, as the well-being of the Church requires. I grant indeed that innovations must not be made rashly, or frequently, or on trifling grounds. Of what is injurious or profitable charity will be the best judge, and if we allow her to mediate, all things will be well. Now it is the duty of a Christian people, with a free conscience, without superstition, with a pious inclination and facility of obedience, to observe the things appointed according to this rule, not to

despise or negligently to omit them, much less openly to violate them through pride and contumacy.”*

* Nempe quid Dominus et totam veræ justitiæ summam, et omnes cultus numinis sui partes, et quicquid ad salutem necessarium erat, sacris suis oraculis tum fideliter complexus est, tum perspicue enarravit; in his solus Magister est audiendus. Quid autem in externa disciplina et cœremoniis non voluit sigillatim prescribere quid sequi debeamus (quod istud pendere a temporum conditione præviderit, neque judicaret unam seculis omnibus formam convenire), confugere hic oportet ad generales quas dedit regulas, ut ad eas exigantur quæcunque ad ordinem et decorum præcipi necessitas ecclesiæ postulabit. Postremo quia ideo nihil expressum tradidit, quia nec ad salutem hæc necessaria sunt, et pro moribus uniuscujusque gentis ac seculi varie accommodari debent ad ecclesiæ ædificationem; prout ecclesiæ utilitas requiret, tam usitatas mutare et abrogare quam novas instituere conveniet. Fateor equidem, non temere, nec subinde, nec levibus de causis ad novationem esse decurrendum. Sed quid noceat vel ædificet, caritas optime judicabit: quam si moderatricem esse patiemur, salva erunt orunes. Jam vero Christiani populi officium est, quæ secundum hunc canonem fuerint instituta, libera quidem conscientia, nullaque superstitione, pia tamen et facili ad obsequendum propensione servare, non contemptim habere, non supina negligentia præterire: tantum abest ut per fastum et contumaciam violare aperte debeat. *Inst. Lib. iv, cap. 10,*

CHAPTER VI.

THE PERPETUITY OF THE SACRAMENTS.

In the preceding discussion the perpetuity of the Sacraments has been taken for granted, and yet, perhaps, not more taken for granted than virtually established; for several of the views expressed not only presume their perpetuity, but, so far as they are well supported, vindicate and affirm it. If, for instance, the Sacraments are monuments of historical events, or signs of regenerating truth, or seals of the everlasting covenant, and if especially they are all these combined, a sufficient proof is given in their very nature that they are not of local and transient, but rather of universal and unceasing obligation. As monuments they must have a permanent existence, and as signs and seals they require a continued observance. The evidence, however, of their perpetuity is not merely presumptive or inferential; the question rests on grounds of its own, and the conclusion may be reached by a separate inquiry.

There is, with respect to positive institutions, a proneness in most minds to opposite extremes. Each of these, however, by a kind of natural antagonism, supplies the corrective of the other, and both, by their mutual collisions, point and give greater authority to that middle view, in which the true doctrine is unquestionably to be found.

Human nature, though one, is not simple. Inherent in it are two distinctive capabilities, according to which it possesses a twofold development. These are reason and

sense, and the development in every case differs as either is allowed to predominate over the other. Reason leans to the inward and spiritual, sense to the outward and material. The former, with a quick and piercing intelligence, aspires to the sphere of pure and unembodied truth; the latter, with an essence less refined, and an action less subtle, finds its appropriate objects in the region of sensible phenomena. As in philosophy these original endowments give rise to very dissimilar theories, so in religion they incline to widely different sentiments and habits. The first is eminently intellectual and ideal, and its tendency is, by inclosing the individual within himself, to merge the social element of religion into the purely personal. Profoundly and serenely meditative, it asks but little aid from external instrumentalities. Delighting in the retirement of the soul within itself, it seeks in spiritual abstractions, apart as much as possible from the ministrations of sense, a satisfying consciousness of the things which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man received. Interpreting with rigorous severity the words of the Apostle, "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," and those of the Redeemer, "God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth;" it depreciates, if it does not actually despise, outward observances and established forms as the "worship of men's hands," as unsuitable to the perfection of the Divine nature, and below, the high level of Christian requirement; and, therefore, aspires to draw nigh unto God directly, by the simple and unassisted exercises of a deeply reflective and believing spirit.

Sense, or the objective tendency in man, on the other hand, *is* characteristically formal, and leads to an almost exclusive

reliance on external means and helps. It overlooks or distrusts those divine instincts and powers which qualify the soul for immediate converse with the Father of Spirits, or, at most, seeks to excite and direct them by the influence of objects which affect the heart only by first impressing the senses. It thus takes an individual out of himself, and makes him slavishly dependent on ritual observances. Incapable of self retirement, it demands form in order to substance and ceremony as a means to sentiment, and, if unchecked, multiplies the external aids to spiritual conviction and emotion until religion ceases to be a reasonable service, and the worship of God loses the beauty of holiness in the austerities of superstition or the formalities of habit.

Now each of these elementary tendencies should have a certain culture and development. Each however may be stimulated to comparative excess, and neither can be exercised alone, or with encouragement disproportionate to its claims, without disturbing that just and fine balance of man's nature on the existence of which a true faith and piety so much depend. One is the complement of the other, and the mutual dependance and interaction of both are essential to "a sound mind," and to "a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto God." The spiritual capability should have the utmost freedom of action. The first in importance, it should also be the chief in exercise. Whatever would weaken its power or impede its operations, no matter what in other respects its plea of utility, should neither be employed nor permitted. And yet, as it is difficult for even the most imperial minds to form and sustain for a long period abstract conceptions of invisible realities, and as, moreover, the highest endowment requires the help and nurture of that which in essence is inferior to itself, the culture and encouragement given to the spiritual fac-

ulty should be qualified, or rather assisted, by those outward means and appliances which reach and affect it through the medium of our subordinate capabilities. Such means are more than conceivable ; they already exist, and, wisely employed, are adapted to fortify the very tendency they are said to enfeeble,—to give repose and direction to the thought, vigour and vividness to the sentiment, and energy and activity to the faith.

Spiritual worship is undoubtedly the only worship that is acceptable to God, and everthing that interferes with this is an error and an evil ; but this is so far from being incompatible with the use of material aids that it is greatly promoted by them, as the higher power is, and in most cases must be, excited by the transmission of influence upwards through the whole range of man's ascending faculties. As a creature of sense as well as of intellect he requires suggestion and guidance, invitation and stimulus from without, agencies to expound and objects to impress ; and these imply, not to say necessitate, occasions of periodical occurrence, and "ordinances of divine service." His condition therefore is most fully met by neither the entire want nor yet the great abundance of religious observances, but by that economy of means which, addressing his whole nature, unites in the same "living sacrifice" all his mutually dependent capabilities ; and thus, by a separate contribution from each, qualifies him with greater freedom and efficiency to worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, having no confidence in the flesh.

These remarks, while condemning that excess of ceremony which gives to the worship of some churches the character of a mechanical formalism, anticipate the spirit, if they do not exhaust the strength of the objections, urged by the

Friends and others, against Baptism and the Lord's Supper as permanent institutions. These rites, it is alleged, belonged to the earliest stages of Christian development, to the period of transition from a purely Jewish to a strictly evangelical conception of the kingdom of heaven, and were, like useless incrustations, to fall off in the after growth of a more enlightened piety. They were suited to a time when faith was feeble, and a long dependance on instituted ceremony had created a want for which it was necessary to make some temporary provision ; but though permitted to the Jewish converts in condescension to their prejudices and in aid of their feebleness, they were subsequently to be cast aside, as the helps and supports of a childhood which had now passed away.

This objection, it is easy to see, is the fruit of theory and not of criticism. It comes out of a position antecedently taken, rather than out of an inquiry into the proper evidence, conducted freely and without pre-possession. Whatever force it has, it owes to that purely subjective view of religion which condemns, as temptations to formality, all established signs of faith and ceremonies of worship. But this view is not so axiomatic as to need no proof. It requires itself confirmation, and is available for argument only as it receives, what it is impossible to give it, the support of Scripture and the sanction of reason. It is no sufficient demonstration in its favour that the kingdom of God is said to be eminently spiritual—not in word but in power—not outward challenging the observation, but inward regulating the affections. This may be allowed without any consequence injurious to the authority of instituted ordinances. In no passage in which this language is held is the design to disparage, much less to abolish, the external aids to religion. The most unquestionable spirituality is

perfectly compatible with the observance of symbolic rites, and may owe if not its existence yet its depth and quickened activity to their appointed instrumentality.

Nor does it avail to quote, even as independent texts and apart from their logical connexion, the statements of Paul and Jesus already referred to: "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." "The hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth." The full import of these Scriptures may be admitted—is admitted—consistently with the use of sacraments and other means. There may be to the whole extent of the demand "spirit" and "truth" in the worship, and yet be fixed and recurrent forms in the habit; and in most cases the latter are not only serviceable but indispensable to the former. That the passages do not imply even the possible existence in the present life of a perfection of nature which can derive no advantage from established ordinances; that, especially, they do not, by implication or otherwise, deny the authority or forbid the observance of such ordinances, a slight consideration of their terms, certainly of their context, will be sufficient to evince.

The declaration of the Apostle has specific reference to the prejudices which deny the lawfulness or otherwise of certain kinds of food, and is in reality a reproof of the weakness which allows the question of abstinence or indulgence to enter into the estimate that is formed of individual piety. Personal christianity, he affirms, does not consist in a practical discrimination between particular meats and drinks, so that one is better than another as he *observes* or neglects the distinction, but in the realized presence

and united powers of righteousness, peace, and joy. So the teaching of our Lord has respect to the rival claims set up by Judea and Samaria to the exclusive sanctity of their respective mountains for sacrifice and worship. He does not say, nor intend to intimate, that the social character of worship is to give way to purely personal acts, in which there shall be neither ceremony nor sacrament; but only that Zion and Gerizim are no longer to enjoy a privileged consecration; that "the carnal ordinances imposed until the time of the reformation" are henceforth to lose their authority as Divine enactments; that Jehovah is no more to be conceived of as a provincial and tutelary Deity, bestowing his choicest care on either Jew or Samaritan, but as a universal Father and an infinite Spirit, yearning with the same tender compassion over all his creatures; and hence that the worship hereafter and now to be offered him, must be one having the attributes of truth and spirituality agreeing with this higher revelation of his nature. Besides which, it must be observed, that the same Apostle who insists on the inward essence of the kingdom of God, baptized Crispus and Gaius and the household of Stephanus, was present at the administration of the Lord's Supper at Troas, and gave direction for its due observance at Corinth; and that he who in the plenitude of his redeeming power abolished the sanctity of place and the authority of the Jewish ceremonial, not only gave the sanction of his approval to the daily baptisms of his disciples, but instituted the rite itself, as well as the other ordinance by which his death was to be held in believing and grateful commemoration. So that neither the language of our Lord nor that of the Apostle, can be urged as an argument against the use of established forms, nor, therefore, be pleaded as a reason for only that kind of worship, which

consists in the self reflective operations of the individual mind, unaided by ceremony or sign.

That the Christian Sacraments were founded on rights and usages eminently Jewish—were only the continuance under certain modifications of observances that were intended to be abolished—and were consequently, after a temporary service, to pass away in the entire extinction of the economy from which they had been taken, is an objection of very little weight. The premises by no means contain the conclusion. An early institution may disappear as well in the complete transfiguration of its character as in the absolute annihilation of its substance; and the very fact that our Lord, while allowing other ceremonies to perish, rescued from the general repeal of the ancient ritual two of its most important elements, and gave them a new appointment and office, is at least a presumption that he intended them, in a strictly evangelical application, to be of permanent obligation and use. The Jewish undoubtedly gave way before the Christian, so that all of the former that was not remodelled and consecrated to higher objects was annulled in the substitution of the latter; but the abrogation of a whole economy, as an economy, does not necessarily involve the destruction of every constituent part. Yet if it did, Baptism and the Lord's Supper would lose nothing in the wreck, as these were not Jewish but Christian,—not a brief continuation of the past, but a regulative commencement of the future. They were not observed as modified rites of an old, but established as distinguishing signs of a new dispensation, ordinances already existing being employed as the stock on which to graft services of much deeper import, and means of much richer grace.

But the answer to objections is the least portion of the argument for the perpetuity of the Sacraments. The ques-

tion occupies ground of its own, and rests on evidence more than sufficient for its support. This evidence is taken partly from reason, partly from Scripture, and generally from the manifest agreement and union of both.

Reason has already suggested some proof. An implied testimony is given in the conclusion, that human nature is such as to require, though sparingly yet really, the assistance of outward means. This admitted, it only remains to be determined what means are most appropriate and effective. But this is not the whole of the case. Reason pronounces a still further judgment. What is found to be profitable is also felt to be inevitable; the measure of advantage is the gauge of necessity. Man cannot, especially in his social relation, serve God by continuous acts of self-communing thought. Such quietism may be realized by a few mystics who love to dream in seclusion, but is hardly possible to the multitude who pant to worship in society. They have little power, and still less desire, to break away from the presence and dispense with the aid of external objects. Even were it their duty, they could not habitually look inward, shut themselves up within the sanctuary of their own hearts, and there, in the deep repose of a self-reflective consciousness, wait for some divine afflatus to move upon the soul, as the wind breathes over the face of the waters. They need suggestion and excitement from without, something which reminds them of obligation, and yet enriches them with privilege. Not only from habit but from pre-disposition and felt necessity, they seek in sensible impressions the motives to spiritual communion, and in regulated services the stimulus to spiritual affections. And so urgent is their demand for these, that a violent and systematic coercion of their religious instincts would be required to overcome and silence it; for the tendency of hu-

man nature,—a tendency rooted in its very constitution,—is not to a worship which forbids either rite or symbol, but to one which admits and multiplies both to an injurious and corrupting excess. It is therefore no offence to the Gospel, no detraction from its spirituality, and no impeachment of its power, to affirm that, even under its influence, ordinances of some kind would be sure to come into existence, as, unless they were prohibited, necessity would originate what authority had not provided. Besides, the religious sensibilities do not flow back upon themselves, or terminate in their own excitement. They press for utterance and manifestation. Naturally aspiring upward to the great object of adoration and faith, they readily force their way outward into some recurring habit of devotional exercise. Entwined and blended with the social affections, they instinctively take a social form of development; and this, by a reflex influence on the sensibilities themselves, gradually becomes a ceremony of established reputation, and is adopted as the means of invigorating the very sentiments which at first it was intended only to express.

It was to be expected, therefore, that Christianity would not be wanting in permanent institutions of religious service. There was, antecedent to all Scriptural inquiry, ground for the presumption, that the Divine Founder of our Faith, knowing what was in man, would establish, in connexion with the Gospel, a suitable ministry of positive observances; such observances as, while assisting the apprehension of truth and the discharge of duty, would regulate to a due proportion that dependance on external means which, left to itself, is sure to degenerate into extremes. Viewed in the light of this presumption, the Sacraments of the New Testament, as parts of a still more general ministry, appear to have the very conditions re-

quired; one, perhaps, more strikingly than the other, but both sufficiently to support their claim to an enduring authority. They relate to nothing subordinate or transient, but to that which is supreme alike in principle and in privilege. Originally "from heaven," they still retain the impression of their first design. They have nothing of "the weakness and unprofitableness of the commandment going before," on account of which they should cease to be used; but rather the decided characteristics of universal propriety and utility which plainly mark them out for unceasing observance.

Take that which, apart from the theory of baptismal regeneration, may possibly be considered as of least importance. An individual gives himself or his child to the Lord. He does this not secretly, but openly, with a view to membership in the kingdom of God. In each case the duty is imperative, and the privilege inestimable. The occasion is of great solemnity, the consecration of unspeakable interest—not unfitting to be signalised by an everlasting memorial. The act is not alone, standing out in solitary isolation and self-completeness, but one which presumptively unites the future to the present, and pledges the service of a whole life. It does not die away into itself, but marks a period from which separation from the world and incorporation with the people of God visibly and formally commences. It has therefore all the force and meaning of a covenant transaction, implying, as it obviously does, reciprocal engagements and promises. Having the substance of a covenant, it is not improper to give it the form—the emphasis and ratification of some distinctive and appropriate sign; and the form which commends itself for equal simplicity and expressiveness is baptism with water into the name of the triune Jehovah.

Nothing could be more significant and impressive than this rite, though only once observed as a ceremony it ever exists as a fact. It serves for perpetual instruction, enduring memorial, and indelible signature. In language too striking to be mistaken it affirms the existence of inward depravity, and the necessity of Divine influence to regenerate the affections and the will. It also illustrates the nature of that spiritual ablution by which an individual becomes in reality, what the ordinance makes him in appearance, a member of the Church of Christ. Attesting at the very first his relation to the covenant of redemption, it binds him ever afterwards to all that the covenant implies; becomes the pledge of promises given, and the remembrance of obligations contracted; and thus, by an appeal of mingled encouragement and admonition, addresses at the same time both his faith and his fidelity, offering unfailing support to the one, and urging imperative claims on the other. Baptism, in fact, is an unceasing rehearsal of Divine condescension and of human duty; an imperishable witness of past dedication to the Lord, and of visible incorporation with his people; a continual enforcement of the truth, virtually acknowledged in the rite itself, "Ye are not your own," and of the consequent exhortation, "Glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's;" an ever-existing monument and record of privileges, vows, and growing responsibilities, of all the interests, indeed, present and future, involved in the position of one who is "redeemed from the curse of the law," and "called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ our Lord."

Again: The greatest fact in the history of our Lord was his death, as on this primarily depended the salvation of the world. Other facts were accessory to redemption, but redemption itself was wrought out by his decease which

he accomplished at Jerusalem. This, the principal fact of his history, is also the most important object of our faith. Faith is ever strongest in presence of the Cross, and love kindles to its purest fervours when gazing on the Man of Sorrows. The ripest piety indeed is but the maturest knowledge of the crucified Jesus, but a knowledge vivified to sympathy and exalted to fellowship. Growth in grace, therefore, depends on habitual proximity to Calvary, and Christian proficiency in every degree is obtained by a deep acquaintance with the Saviour as the Lamb slain to take away our sins.

Now by a special provision the means to this acquaintance are immediately at hand. The past is perpetuated in symbol, and Calvary, with its solemn and momentous scenes, is brought near to us. A supper is instituted, of which the design is to shew the Lord's death until he come. Few and scanty are the elements furnished, as the object is not to satisfy the appetite but to nourish the faith. Only such are supplied as, by addressing the thoughts through the senses, will contribute to this end. These are bread and wine, so given and received as to represent the broken body and shed blood of the crucified Redeemer. The elements themselves are significant of the spiritual blessings—the "meat indeed and drink indeed"—which result from his propitiatory death, while eating and drinking describe those exercises of the soul by which the heavenly gifts are personally appropriated and enjoyed. The whole is a sacred feast of Christian communion, in which believers are marked off by a strong line of separation from the world; in which their secular anxieties are excluded by purely religious interests, and the peace of God, reigning throughout the whole depth of thought and feeling, keeps their hearts and minds through Christ Jesus; in which, by the commanding

attraction of a single theme, winning and chaining every attention, by the faith which looks only at one object and the love which glows with a common excitement, there is presented and realized the beautiful idea of fellowship in unity and unity in fellowship. It is a feast upon a sacrifice, in which the Saviour appears obedient unto death, making peace through the blood of his cross, and reconciling all things unto himself; in which the mystery of his redeeming work stands out in the light of an almost irresistible revelation, and the riches of his redeeming grace are conveyed to the poor in spirit with the grand munificence of a royal largess. All that is supremely important to man is there symbolized or suggested. Sin is recognized as exceedingly sinful, and law as essentially just and good; holiness is beheld in its serene and spotless beauty, and love in its majestic and overwhelming tenderness. The soul is won to a sweet captivity of all its affections. A mysterious influence, strong in every attribute of spiritual power, draws it to a closer acquaintance and knits it in a deeper sympathy with Christ. The attractions of his presence enfeeble and overpower every inferior attraction. The solicitations of the flesh and the importunities of the world, all the rivalries, indeed, which separately aspire to enthrone themselves in the heart, are unheeded and lost in a self-forgetting and self-absorbing interest in him; and the believer, exalted by the visions of faith to the raptures of love, virtually professes with the Apostle, "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord."

Thus simple in character and easy in observance, thus instructive in substance and impressive in effect, the two symbolical ordinances of Christianity are undeniable in their adaptations to the religious requirements of our nature. They appeal to the senses the more readily to

affect the heart. They meet man in his dependance on outward objects for the excitement and right direction of his inward capabilities, and facilitate that profound and nurturing acquaintance with divine things in which the essence of a true religion consists. Were personal piety admitted to the proof of this, it would furnish the amplest corroborations. It would vindicate the statement, especially in relation to the Lord's Supper, by the most unquestionable testimonies of a past and present and ever-enlarging experience. Now fitness is a fair presumption of perpetuity. In the absence of prohibition or repeal, the continual suitability of the rites evinces, even at the lowest estimate of the argument, the continued propriety of their observance. Whatever utility constituted the original ground of their institution, this still exists as a reason for their uninterrupted celebration.*

* If this be denied on the plea that Baptism and the Lord's Supper were a concession to Jewish prejudices, and that, therefore, as no such prejudices have now to be conciliated the same utility cannot be supposed, the following remarks, in which the conclusion is destroyed in the overthrow of the premises, will be a sufficient reply to the objection. "We maintain," says Dr. Halley, "that the notion of a concession to Jewish prejudice is wholly gratuitous, or rather absolutely false. What prejudice had the Jew, which would not be *offended* rather than *conciliated* by either of these sacramental services? That both baptism and the Lord's supper were founded upon Jewish practices, we readily admit. Our Lord adopted the rites of the Jews, and what is remarkable, rites unauthorised by the law of Moses, and consecrated them to be the symbolic services of his church; yet in their new form they must have been directly opposed to every Jewish prejudice. Whether we refer baptism to the divers washings of the Jews observed in accordance with the Mosaic law, or to the baptism of proselytes prevailing in the time of our Lord, the Christian rite must have been opposed to the prevalent opinions and feelings of the Jewish nation. If it were represented as a purification from legal pollution, would it have conciliated a Jew to require, indiscriminately from all, clean, or unclean, and specially from himself, a legal purification, when he knew that he had contracted no legal pollution? Why was the

But no adaptation of the Sacraments to the obvious wants of our nature would suffice to establish their authority, apart from the testimony of holy Scripture. To this testimony other considerations may be auxiliary, but cannot on their own account be convincing. Does the word of God then affirm the perpetuity of these services, either directly, or by such intimations as on a fair logical valuation have

scrupulous Pharisee, proud in his legal righteousness, moving with ever-wakeful scrupulosity to preserve his long robes and broad phylacteries from every stain, to be thus treated, as if he had been like a heathen man and a publican? He had observed most rigidly, not only the baptisms of the law, but the ablutions of the Scribes; he had purified himself from the touch of the dead, and had washed when he came from market; he was perfectly clean according to the law of Moses, and equally so according to the traditions of the elders; why should he submit to a new cleansing, as if he were a common and profane man? His baptism, whatever might have been the reason of it, was surely a preposterous mode of conciliating his prejudice. Respecting the Lord's supper, similar remarks, with at least equal force and propriety may be made. The ritual of the supper is evidently derived from the usages of the Jews in celebrating the passover. 'Not the poorest in Israel,' says the Talmud, 'might eat of it, till he was seated.' Jesus sat down with the twelve. The officiating minister or president of the feast broke a cake of unleavened bread, and gave thanks to God, who bringeth bread out of the earth. Among the several cups of wine used on the occasion, there was one called the cup of blessing, or thanksgiving, over which they gave thanks, and sang the Hallel, or sacred psalms. These usages Jesus consecrated as the memorial of his own propitiatory death. But on this very account, the celebration of the Lord's supper, except on the day of the paschal feast, would have shocked the religious feelings of the Jews. The rites of the passover were appropriate to the fourteenth day of the first month, the anniversary of the original institution. Their observance on any other day, unless, in an emergency, on the fourteenth day of the second month, especially their weekly observance, and their observance without the other parts of the paschal service, must have appeared unauthorised and profane to the eyes of such as looked with veneration on the institutes of Moses, or the traditions of the elders. Can we then suppose that this service was conceded by the Apostles to Jewish prejudice?" &c. &c.—*The Sacraments.* p. p. 70, 71, 72.

affect the heart. They meet man in his dependance on outward objects for the excitement and right direction of his inward capabilities, and facilitate that profound and nurturing acquaintance with divine things in which the essence of a true religion consists. Were personal piety admitted to the proof of this, it would furnish the amplest corroborations. It would vindicate the statement, especially in relation to the Lord's Supper, by the most unquestionable testimonies of a past and present and ever-enlarging experience. Now fitness is a fair presumption of perpetuity. In the absence of prohibition or repeal, the continual suitability of the rites evinces, even at the lowest estimate of the argument, the continued propriety of their observance. Whatever utility constituted the original ground of their institution, this still exists as a reason for their uninterrupted celebration.*

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deemed "weak and beggarly." They belong not to the glory which "was to be done away," but to that which "excelleth," and was to "remain." They stand related to an economy which sums up and comprehends all that was precious and durable in every preceding economy, and which, from its full disclosures of the mind of God, is in itself complete and final. They consequently participate, at least by reflection, in the higher glory of this concluding ministration, and hence in the perpetuity which inheres in its nature and pertains to its mission. In the third place, there is nothing in the terms or circumstances in which these rites were instituted to restrict them to a limited period or to particular persons, but everything in both, especially as viewed in the light of Apostolic practice, to justify their application to the proper subjects throughout all ages. In the commission to baptize "all nations" are included; in the command to eat the Lord's Supper "remembrance" is prescribed; and in both perpetuity is plainly implied.

To this may be added, that there is no intimation given in any single instance of their observance, or in any of those discourses of St. Paul, in which the spirit and power of true religion are contrasted so broadly with mere ritual formality, that the Sacraments are inconsistent with the genius of Christianity, and were permitted to the first converts only as helps to their weakness, or as concessions to their prejudice, during the infancy of their piety. It is strange that, notwithstanding the sensitive jealousy of the Apostles for the purity of the Gospel, their scrupulous care to preserve its fine gold undimmed by base admixtures, their anxiety to give authority and permanence to nothing but what should prove itself the wisdom of God and the power of God, and their equal solicitude to keep

down and extinguish the "desire," so natural to weak believers "to make a fair show in the flesh,"—it is strange (especially when it is considered that their instructions were the completion of Divine revelation, the last words to which the signature of Heaven was affixed), that no notice, however slight, should escape them, that the ordinances administered by them, or with their sanction, were essentially carnal, relics of a past age, and soon to be abandoned. This strangeness appears all the greater since we find the Apostle Paul specially discoursing on one of these ordinances, and under circumstances in which the correction of abuses in its celebration must have presented a peculiar opportunity for stating the true doctrine respecting it. One would have thought, indeed, that had these ceremonies been provisional and temporary, instituted to conciliate prejudice or aid infirmity, some arrangement would have been made for their gradual discontinuance, lest the prejudice or infirmity continuing the ceremonies should continue also. But no such arrangement can be discovered. The services established by the Redeemer were perpetuated by the Apostles, and left, with the commendation of their example and instruction, as the heritage of the Church for ever.

In the next place, it seems incapable of dispute that the Apostles understood the command to baptize all nations as of permanent authority. The very phrase, "all nations," would oblige them to this construction. The only question concerning which there can be the slightest hesitation respects the meaning of to baptize. This, it is said, should here have the sense of to purify. But there is no sufficient evidence that the figurative ought in this instance to take the place of the literal. Had the Saviour intended the figurative he must have specified it, as the Apostles had been

accustomed to baptize literally with water, and were probably unfamiliar with any other than the literal use of the word. They would naturally interpret the commission by their previous knowledge of its terms, and execute its requirement in a way agreeing with their well-understood practice. They could hardly suppose our Lord to command them to purify all nations into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, as such a version would prescribe no intelligible duty.

Nor, taking name for person and into in the sense of for, is it likely they would regard him as saying "purify them for the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost;"* if by purify is meant anything else than a ceremonial ablution. For, first, such a rendering is unusual, as the passages in which similar language is employed imply the use of water in the baptisms of which they speak. It is thus with the following: "All were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea." "Were ye baptized into the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had baptized into my own name." "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." Of the Samaritans it is said, "the Holy Ghost was fallen upon none of them; only they were baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus." And, secondly, to purify, except ceremonially, is not the work of man but of God. The only baptism by which men can make disciples of one another, and the Church of all nations, is the baptism of the body and not of the mind. The sense in which the Apostles really did understand the commission to baptize, is happily

* Godwin. *Christian Baptism*, 151—154.

closed against dispute by their subsequent practice. Their conduct plainly interprets their conception. They fulfilled the command literally, by baptizing with water; if seldom themselves yet commonly by evangelists and others, to whom for the most part they entrusted the duty. They thus administered the rite to the thousands who were pricked in their hearts at the Pentecost; to the Samaritans; to Cornelius and his kinsmen; and to all others who, exercising repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, desired a recognized connexion with his people.

Of the perpetuity of the Lord's Supper the evidence is equally direct and convincing. We have already seen that, though established in anticipation of the Saviour's death, it was designed for a memorial of it. But to be a memorial it must be permanent. "Do this in remembrance of me," is virtually a command to repeat with solemn commemoration the act now for the first time enjoined. Accordingly we find, as soon as churches were established, believers periodically coming together to eat the Lord's Supper. The propriety, nay the obligation, of this custom is affirmed by St. Paul on the authority of a special revelation from Christ himself. The Corinthians had mistaken the character of this feast, and had fallen into corrupting excesses in its celebration. Their irregularities were such as newly converted heathens, accustomed to the intemperate festivities of idol worship, would be liable to run into. And the Corinthians had been "Gentiles carried away unto dumb idols, even as they were led." The Apostle corrects their abuses, and prescribes, not in his own name, but in the name of the Lord himself, from whom he had specially received it: a true account of the origin and nature of the rite. In this address he not only suppresses the unbecoming and regular administration of the Supper in the common

but by giving instruction for its *right* observance he presumes and in effect prescribes its *continued* observance. Though here apparently were no Jewish prejudices to conciliate, he nevertheless offers no intimation that the Christian festival is to fall into disuse. Though the degradation of the service to the character of an idolatrous revel afforded an excellent opportunity for fixing its true value as an expedient, if not for setting it aside altogether, yet the only doctrine taught respecting it is one from which the idea of unceasing obligation cannot possibly be separated.

He had previously said, "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread. Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table, and of the table of devils;"—words which imply, without the slightest shade of uncertainty, that the communion of the body and blood of Christ was recognized and observed in the church as a fixed and regular ordinance of the Gospel. Now he says, "Whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup: for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body." In which passages he proclaims not the indifference, but the importance and solemnity of this sacrament; cautions unthinking levity and indulgent appetite against receiving it; indicates the self-communing and reverent spirit in which it should be celebrated; and thus, by an implication only less explicit than a positive announcement, asserts its con-

tinued existence and authority. But when again he observes, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come," he all but places the question beyond the limits of controversy; for every one whose judgment is not surrendered to an adverse theory, must regard his language as equal to a declaration that the commemorative service is to remain in force until the Saviour's final appearing. That he does not in so many words affirm this is only additional evidence in its favour, as the idea seems so natural to him that it blends unbidden with his thoughts, and comes out incidentally in his discourse, giving shape to his expressions when the subject itself is not immediately before his view. To us, indeed, the inference appears inevitable, that, by an indirectness of statement, of which the very casualty is corroboration, the Apostle assigns to the Supper of the Lord a perpetuity like that which pertained to the passover of the Jews, a perpetuity, that is, extending over the whole period during which the Christian economy is to last; and in this manner virtually transfers to the Church the command anciently addressed to Israel: "Ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."

Our conclusion then is, that both Sacraments have all the characteristic marks and evidences of fixed and durable institutions; that the charter which conveys to us the privilege and exacts from us the duty of their observance, originally given from heaven, still retains the visible signature of the Divine hand, and will continue to retain it, transmitting both privilege and duty to succeeding generations, until "the times of the restitution of all things."

CHAPTER VII.

ON SACRAMENTAL EFFICACY.

The line which separates truth from error, though in every case real, is not always broad enough to preserve from mistake. Sometimes indeed the two pass into such shadowy outlines, and by subtle approaches come into such close proximity, that there is danger lest the interval which really divides them be overlooked, and the one be confounded with or accepted for the other.

In the preceding chapter we have spoken of the utility of the Sacraments, in their adaptation as means of religious advantage to the spiritual necessities of man's nature and condition. But what is the precise nature, and what the measure of this utility? What are the benefits actually conferred by Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and what the conditions of their enjoyment? This is a question concerning which there is the greatest difference both of opinion and creed; and yet one of which the difference is not of extremes only, for within the outermost limits of existing beliefs are modifications of sentiment which gradually approximate each other, until they all but meet in the common acknowledgment of some central idea. So that in the new field of controversy which this question opens to us, truth and error are occasionally found in immediate neighbourhood, the one gliding so insensibly into the other that it is not always easy to discriminate their distinctive features, and to exhibit them in their

separate individuality. *Of some views, however, the character is too marked to be mistaken, and the aberration from the word of God too great to pass without notice. Such is the dogma of Sacramental efficacy, whether as held by Roman Catholics or by Anglo-Romanists. This dogma stands out in such bold relief of error, that it is easy to dis sever it from every other opinion; and at the same time wields so vast a sway over the faith of ancient and modern Christendom, that it is important to consider it alone.

By the Roman Church it is maintained that the Sacraments themselves have a power to operate upon man's nature, independently of the dispositions with which he may receive them. The very elements are said, after consecration, to be endowed with a mysterious virtue which, when unobstructed by mortal sin, is invariably imparted to the recipient, now making him a new creature, and again nourishing the hidden life of his soul. The Council of Trent not only asserts this doctrine, but visits with a special anathema all who are ignorant or bold enough to deny it. Having in a previous canon taught that "the Sacraments contain the grace which they signify," it says, "If any one shall say, that by the Sacraments of the New Testament grace is not conferred by the act performed, but that faith alone in the Divine promise is sufficient to obtain the grace; let him be anathema."* Of Baptism in particular it affirms, that "by it we are made entirely new creatures, obtaining a full and complete remission of all sins," and of the Eucharist that, containing under the species of sensible things the whole person of Christ, it conveys with Him not

* Si quis dixerit, per ipsa Novae Legis sacramenta, ex opere operato, non conferri gratiam, sed solum fidem promissionis ad gratiam consequendam sufficere: anathema sit. Con. Tri. Sess. vii. Can. 8.

only the remission of sins but all other grace. Material elements are in effect invested with the office of spiritual agencies, and the communication of their secret influence is made to depend less upon the piety which receives than upon the authority which administers them. Nay, the latter is supremely important, and important whatever the character of the officiating priest, as, providing he observe all that belongs to the due administration of the service, he confers the benefit of the Sacrament, though himself be living in deadly sin.* Piety is of little account, save as this consists in the absence of aggravated guilt. No positive act of the will, no particular movement of the affections is demanded. The condition of grace is not the activity of faith, but the observance of a rite. In the case of infants that condition is impossible, and in the case of adults it is not exacted. Divine ordinances are thus reduced to little more than sacred spells; their action is mystic and not moral. Virtue goes out of them, as healing mercy went out of the Saviour when the hem of his garment was touched. Man is simply passive to their impression, or recipient of their influence. He is the subject on which they operate, and not the agent to whom they serve as means. Having no intelligent participation in their design, he has nothing to do but to allow them to take effect. He is therefore in observing them, virtually excused from every exercise which comes within the scope of the duty to work out his own salvation. No inward struggles, no groanings which cannot be uttered, no hungering and thirsting after righteousness, no strenuous efforts to shut out the world and hold immediate communion with God, are required. That profound sense of personal responsibility which lies at the root of earnest religious endeavour is dismissed for implicit reliance on priestly

* Con. Tri. Sess. vii. Can. 12.

mediation, while the attainment of spiritual good is ensured rather by the efficacy of external rites than by the living energy of faith and love.* Whether this doctrine has any foundation in Scripture or not, one can hardly, even before inquiry, resist the impression of its inevitably degrading tendency. It degrades man, because it makes him in the very lowest sense "subject to ordinances." It degrades religion also, because it brings it down from its sublime elevation, as the supreme effort of reason and the noblest exercise of faith, to the low level of a mechanical formalism and of an indiscriminating credulity.

Closely resembling this view, and therefore embraced in the same reply, is the theory of Anglo-Catholicism. This

* "The general belief in Magic, in the early ages of the Church, may sufficiently account for the ready reception of such a theory of sacramental influence. The maxim of Augustine, *Accedit verbum ad elementum, et fit Sacramentum*, appears to be, in fact, an adoption of the popular belief respecting the powers of incantations and charms, to the subject of Religion. The miracles themselves, indeed, of our Saviour were supposed to act in this manner, even by those who did not impute them to the agency of evil. His word, his touch, was sought for by persons acknowledging in faith the reality of his mission. "Say in a word only," said the Centurion, "and my servant shall be healed." The woman who forced her way through the crowd fully trusted that she should be made whole if she could *touch* but the hem of the garment of Jesus. And our Saviour, whose condescension was shewn even to the prejudices of his faithful followers, often accompanied the working of his miracles with significant acts. In the instance of the woman, indeed, thus suddenly cured, He is described as having perceived that some one had touched Him, by the fact, that *virtue* had gone out of Him;—a mode of speaking characteristic of the prevalent idea concerning the operation of Divine Influence, as of something passing from one body to another.—The physical philosophy received in the schools, was in itself favourable to this doctrine of sacramental efficiency. Nature being regarded as a system of powers inherent in matter, it would be easily conceived, that these powers might be secretly directed by that sovereign will which gave them being. As they operated visibly in various ways through the Divine Word, so they might also act invisibly for the production of spiritual effects."—*Dr. Hampden's Bampton Lectures*. 1832. p. p. 315, 316.

theory, it is true, differs from that of the Roman Church in some minor particulars, and also in this capital article, that it does not assert the transmutation of the eucharistic elements into the twofold nature of the Son of God ; but in the actual effects attributed to the ordinances themselves it is substantially the same. The Sacraments, it is virtually contended, possess a certain indefinable power of originating and sustaining spiritual conditions. They are not only signs of Christian doctrine and seals of Christian privilege and duty. They are not simply helps to human infirmity in the apprehension of divine realities, or occasions of gracious communication to the consciously reflective and believing mind ; but efficacious means by which, without the concurrence of the understanding and will, and, therefore, independently of a strictly intellectual process, the soul is brought into vital connexion with the Holy Spirit. Theirs is, at least subordinately, a power of causation. They regenerate and succour, give life and maintain it. There is in the one Sacrament the forgiveness of sin, the subjugation of evil propensities, and the infusion of a spiritual principle which in after years may be developed into a conscious sanctification ; in the other there is the quickening and nourishing of this principle to greater activity and strength.

The Sacraments, says one distinguished expounder of the Tractarian creed, are "the chief and central fountain of the vital influences of religion, when the church is in health and vigour ; their never wholly obstructed source, when she is overspread with the frost of indifference ; their last and innermost fastnesses, when latent infidelity gnaws and eats away the heart of her creed, and of all her collateral ordinances."* Mr. Newman, while a member of the

* Gladstone. *Church Principles*, p. 183.

Church of England, taught, and made the Homilies of that Church responsible for his teaching, that the relation of faith to justification is secondary and subservient to the Sacraments, the one sustaining what the other in the first instance imparts. "Faith," says he, "secures to the soul continually those gifts which Baptism primarily conveys, The Sacraments are the immediate, Faith is the secondary, subordinate instrument of justification; or, we may say, varying our mode of expression, that the Sacraments are its instrumental, and Faith its sustaining cause."* "Not only is there nothing in Scripture to sever Regeneration from Baptism," we read in one of the Tracts for the Times, "but Baptism is spoken of as the source of our spiritual birth, as no other cause is, save God Holy Scripture, indeed, *connects* other causes besides Baptism, but it at once marks, by the very difference of language, that these are only more remote instruments: we are not said to be born of them as of parents, but *by* or *through* them; . . . no other instrument being spoken of as having the same relation to our heavenly birth as this of water."† It was one of the conceits of the Fathers, that the baptism of our Lord by John sanctified water to the washing away of sin; that, in fact, Jesus submitted to the rite for the purpose of giving to water the mysterious power of regenerating the soul. Dr. Pusey, expounding their view, observes; "They doubted not, that the very element had, by its contact with Him in this His condescension, received a degree of sanctity and fitness to be a vehicle of spiritual gifts; they believed that the Holy Ghost descended therein upon themselves and their children, because he therein descended upon the Son of God." And, adopting this fancy, he affirms; "At the least, our Lord's baptism in Jordan im-

* Lectures on Justification, p. 289. + Vol. ii, Part ii, p. 25, 26.

parted to the whole element of water a capacity of becoming the instrument of washing away sin, which apart from his baptism, it would not have had."*

The bishop of Exeter, in his Pastoral Letter for 1851, replying to a statement of the Archbishop of Canterbury, enquires, "But when, and how, does the word of God tell us that man is accepted with God, and endued with His Spirit? In and by *Baptism*. . . . Baptism is the appointed channel of that grace which makes us new creatures." p. 18. At page 53, speaking of the condemnation by some high authority of the dogma, that "a propitiatory virtue is attributed to the Eucharist," he writes, "I am not aware of our Church having anywhere condemned such a doctrine. That it has condemned 'the sacrifices of masses,' we know and heartily rejoice. But this is very far indeed from saying or meaning that the Eucharist hath not 'a propitiatory virtue;' and we must be very careful how we deny that virtue to it." In his Pastoral for 1854, commenting on both Sacraments, the bishop asks, "For what is holy Baptism, but the inserting us into God manifest in the flesh—the incarnate Son? What is holy communion, but the incarnate Son coming into us, nourishing and feeding us with his own humanity?" . . . How all this is wrought in Baptism, we are not told,—if we were it would no longer be a mystery. But, because it is a mystery, because God's wondrous working by it is not explained; because, in short, it is left a trial of our faith, too many among us choose to set at nought the Holy Spirit's express teaching of the mighty power of a little "water *ἐν ῥήματι*," (accompanied that is by the ordained form)—and of a morsel of bread and a drop of wine, made by the effectual word of our Lord himself to be his Body and His Blood." p. 33. Dr. Pusey

* Holy Baptism, p. p. 282, 361.

says : " The Holy Eucharist imparteth not life only, spiritual strength, and newness with Christ, and his indwelling and participation of him ; but, in its degree, remission of sins also." " His flesh and blood in the Sacrament shall give life, not only because they are the flesh and blood of the Incarnate Word, who is life, but also because they are the very flesh and blood which were given and shed for the life of the world, and are given to those *for* whom they had been given."* And, finally, from three sermons on the Eucharist by Mr. Denison, Archdeacon of Taunton, the following propositions have been extracted by commissioners specially appointed to examine, and report upon, their doctrine : " That to all who come to the Lord's table, to those who eat and drink worthily, and to those who eat and drink unworthily, the body and blood of Christ are given ; and that by all who come to the Lord's table, by those who eat and drink worthily, and by those who eat and drink unworthily, the body and blood of Christ are received."†

* Sermon on the Eucharist. p. p. 2, 8, 20.

† Mr. Denison explains that, in the three sermons from which the propositions are taken, the meaning is qualified by the following statement :—" That the effect, efficacy, power, or operation of the thing so given and received may be ' unto life,' as in the case of those who receive worthily, or may be ' unto death,' as in the case of those who receive unworthily."—*Vide the Times and Chronicle Newspapers*, Jan. 13, 1855. This, however, does not invalidate the charge that " the thing given and received" is substantially the body and blood of Christ, and has, therefore, on its own account, though variously to different persons, " effect, efficacy, power, and operation."—A similar doctrine is taught by the bishop of Oxford in his charge to the clergy of his diocese, at the last triennial visitation. He affirms as the faith of the Established Church, " that there is a peculiar and supernatural presence of Christ with His people in this holy Sacrament ; that in it He does, in and by the fit reception of the consecrated elements, convey to the faithful worshipper the real partaking of His body and His blood, whereby the souls of faithful people are refreshed ; but that He has not revealed to His people the mode and condition of that presence," &c. &c.

To these many similar quotations might be added from the same and other authors. Fewer, indeed, would have sufficed for a statement of the view they are designed to represent; but it seemed desirable by a comparison of the language of different writers to explicate the principle common to all, and by a selection of several testimonies to illustrate the prevalence and authority of Anglo-Catholic instruction. The former object may still be imperfectly attained, for the language of Tractarian theology is seldom remarkable for its perspicuity. Sometimes a "mystery" or a mysticism is made yet more mysterious by the elaborate intricacy or convenient vagueness of the phraseology employed to express it. It may be in fact that this very texture of words, like a semi-transparent veil, half disclosing and half concealing, is favourable to the impression intended, as, while eluding the clear perception of any positive idea, it suggests the possible presence of some truth hid in the shadow of its own greatness, and, at the same time, gratifies that love of mystery which, in relation to spiritual things, it is natural to the human mind to indulge.

The doctrine taught in the preceding extracts appears generally to be this, that the Sacraments are, in some inexplicable sense, the great and primary vehicles of spiritual gifts—"the chief and central fountains of the vital influences of religion"—to which faith itself, and, therefore, every other exercise of the mind, is secondary and subordinate; so that, in the due observance of them, they become to the recipient the certain means of renewing and invigorating grace. This doctrine, if not identical with that of the Church of Rome, differs from it mainly in stopping short of its monstrous exaggeration. On the efficacy of Baptism, indeed, even this difference cannot be said to

exist, as Popery and Tractarianism equally allege, that the person is regenerated by the administration of the rite. And with respect to the Lord's Supper the distinction, though marked in the single article of transubstantiation, is otherwise of little practical value. By both the personal presence of Christ in the ordinance is resolutely maintained; only in the one case the presence is physical, resulting from the actual conversion of the bread and wine into the substance of the Divine and human natures; while in the other it is "peculiar and supernatural," obtained by the "consecration, oblation, and reception of the elements."* Even the idea of sacrifice is not excluded from the Tractarian hypothesis, for, besides the suspicious use of the term "oblation," the service is in effect acknowledged to have "a propitiatory virtue." In reality the same doctrine belongs substantially both to Popery and Tractarianism. They equally affirm that the Sacraments are the principal conveyances of spiritual influence—the immediate instruments of justifying and regenerating grace. And this they affirm absolutely, in a sense, that is, which excludes from the process the voluntary activity of the individual subject. This is certainly true in the case of Baptism. And even in reference to the other ordinance, the presence that is claimed for Christ, by that very theory which demands the least, is one which connects him by some supernatural conjunction with the consecrated bread and wine; thus making the reception of him quite as much a physical and mechanical as an intellectual and moral act. The doctrine therefore is equal to the assertion, that "the Gift of God" may be received into the heart with a passiveness similar to that with which liquor is received into a vessel; that, in fact, a great change, great

* Bishop of Oxford's Charge.

enough to be denominated a new creation, may be wrought in man's nature, and yet his will, that which constitutes the essence of his personality, may have no share in the work. In other words, it substitutes a mysterious energy transmitted through the channel of an instituted rite, for Divine truth and influence operating conjointly on the reflective and believing mind.

Now it is a preliminary objection to this view of the Sacraments, that it takes them out of the ordinary rank of means of grace, by assigning to them a law of operation peculiar to themselves. Other means are serviceable only as external ministries of divine things, or as occasions of heavenly communication to the religious consciousness of man : their end is answered in the excitement of his rational and emotional nature, and their effects are realized in a deeper conviction, a stronger faith, a holier love. But these are supposed to have a different function, or another mode of influence. There is ascribed to them a kind of inherent efficacy or subordinate causality, which, if it does not make their working wholly independent of personal conditions, ensures in many cases the bestowment of spiritual good without even the knowledge of the individual receiving it. But such a difference in the efficiency of outward means appears in itself extremely improbable. God would scarcely ordain for one solemnity a mode of operation so totally unlike that which he has prescribed for another, especially when the object is to produce a precisely similar effect : at least, the difference can be admitted only on the most unquestionable and decisive proof. Besides, and as a further objection, the tendency if not the design of the theory is to honour the ordinance and degrade the man, and yet while degrading the man to exalt the priest. The man is the patient on whom the ordinance takes effect, and

the priest is an agency, raised by some mysterious connexion with the service, to a sort of partnership with the Divine Being in the communication of spiritual gifts. How different from this seems to have been the judgment of the Apostle, who, nevertheless, was little disposed to lower the ministerial position, declaring of himself, "I magnify mine office." Speaking of one Sacrament, he says, "I thank God that I baptized none of you but Crispus and Gaius; . . . for Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel." And, setting forth the true character and influence of Apostles in relation to the work of the ministry, he inquires, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed; even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase."

Again. If this doctrine of the Sacraments is true, why is it confined to the Gospel? How is it that nothing resembling it is found, or alleged to exist, under the Old Testament economy? The dispensation of Moses was, in a much larger degree than that of Christ, one of form and ritual. A much higher value was attached to priestly function, and a much greater reliance encouraged on external services. The spiritual capabilities were less directly acted upon, and the individual will less vigorously brought into play. The people were trained and disciplined as children; placed under tutors and governors, with a fixed and invariable ceremonial; and, generally, were in a condition of dependance on outward means, which were but little favourable to the development of a distinctive personality in their religious character. And yet we meet with no efficacious instrumentality of rite, like that which

is claimed for the two ordinances of Christianity. There were Sacraments as now, and Sacraments which anticipated, in a similar relation to the existing economy, those instituted in connexion with the Gospel. There were circumcision and the passover; one of the Fathers, the other of Moses. Both were Divine appointments of special authority, and of deep and solemn import. But neither circumcision nor the passover had, or was supposed to have, any office or virtue resembling that which is now ascribed to baptism or the supper of the Lord. Indeed, the Apostle expressly says, "He is not a Jew, who is one outwardly; neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: but he is a Jew, who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter; whose praise is not of men, but of God."* The same is true of the "divers baptisms," and of all other ceremonies, required by the Law. Regeneration was a personal acquisition, and not a ritual endowment; and every degree of spiritual nurture was obtained, though primarily through the grace of God, yet rationally by individual acts, and not mysteriously by the operation of established signs. And can it be thought otherwise now? Has the rite become more efficient, and the agent less responsible? Can it be supposed that in connexion with Christ, grace is attached to outward forms, and subjected to ceremonial conditions by a law of greater rigour or sterner necessity, than in connexion with Moses? Is it likely that, under a system more purely spiritual in its principles and more severely personal in its requirements, with the human will brought into more independent action, and religious service freed from many of its former accidents of time, and place, and mode, man should be less reflective in the duty he observes, or less

* Rom. ii. 28, 29.

conscious and voluntary in the blessing he receives? Are we, in other words, to believe that, in obtaining the gifts of the Spirit, the subject is now more mechanical and less moral, more simply receptive and less intelligently active? It would require considerations of great weight to establish so improbable a supposition.

So far as the doctrine of Sacramental efficacy can be submitted to the test of experience, there is not, it may be asserted, the slightest evidence to support it. And the term experience may be extended so as to include the recorded facts of the New Testament, and all other similar facts, as well as the testimonies of individual consciousness. As to baptism it is admitted, that not one of the vast numbers who received it from John, or from the Apostles during the life of their Master, was regenerated by the rite. Though by the baptism of Christ in Jordan water had been sanctified to the washing away of sin, yet none of those who were subsequently baptized in the same river found any cleansing in its waters. Though from the days of John the kingdom of God was preached, and all men pressed into it, yet they pressed and entered by simple baptism, and not by baptismal regeneration. Nay, at the very time that our Lord delivered to Nicodemus that remarkable statement on which the doctrine is chiefly based, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God," baptismal regeneration was a thing unknown, if not impossible; as this blessing was reserved for the times of refreshing yet to come, when the Spirit should be given by the risen and glorified Saviour. All this is conceded and even demanded, which at least implies, that regeneration and baptism are not inseparable in their nature, and have not always been so in fact.

It is obviously not without advantage to the theory, that

baptismal regeneration is made historically coincident with the descent of the Holy Ghost. It is something to mark off by a broad line of separation the whole of the past, in which not even the shadow of an argument could be found; and something more to connect the blessing in its first gift with a new economy and an unparalleled supply of spiritual influence. The selection of this period, however, is attended with one special inconvenience, that of excluding the Apostles themselves from the benefit, unless indeed it can be shewn, and there is not the least proof of this, that they were re-baptized subsequently to the resurrection of the Son of God. But, besides this, what is there in the simple gift of the Spirit to make it probable that, in consequence thereof, baptism acquires a new office, and regeneration a different instrumentality? Does it follow that, because the fountain of life sends forth a deeper and broader current, a new channel must be made for the conveyance of its waters? that because God becomes more rich and ample in the communication of his grace, a new mode and condition of its reception must be established? It would rather appear, in the absence of all contrary instruction, that as regeneration is a moral and not a physical change, and must, both before and after the Pentecost, be efficiently the work of the same Spirit, precisely the same or very similar terms must ever be attached to it. But if not the new terms proposed would hardly differ so widely from the old, as to resolve themselves into a passive observance of efficacious rites. At least if they did, the difference would surely be stated. If an outward ordinance, previously instituted and well understood, was henceforth to assume quite another character,—to be so exalted, indeed, in nature and office as to become the certain instrument of regeneration,—such a change, one might suppose,

would either be expressed in words or exemplified in fact. But we have neither statement nor example. In the promise of the Spirit by Jesus Christ, there is no intimation that his descent would be accompanied by an augmented efficacy in the baptismal service; and in the circumstances attending or following the fulfilment of that promise, there is nothing to justify the belief that such an increase took place.

The Spirit came upon the Apostles in a baptism of fire, and under his extraordinary influence they spoke to the multitudes at Jerusalem. Nothing was said by Peter, the chief speaker on the occasion, of the altered nature and higher office of baptism, though much was said of the promise and gift of the Holy Ghost. No allusion was made to the connexion now established between the due administration of the rite and the regenerating presence of the Spirit: every one was rather left to infer that baptism occupied the same position as before, and stood as much apart from regeneration as ever. Accordingly, when the words of the Apostle had taken effect upon the people, and constrained many to give themselves to Christ, it is simply related: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them three thousand souls." It is not said of them that they were regenerated, much less that they were regenerated by means of the ceremony performed. Though this was baptism on a large scale and on a memorable occasion, though, especially, it was the first administration of the ordinance after the supposed addition to it of a peculiar efficacy by virtue of its connexion with the newly descended Spirit, yet nothing is reported of the thousands who received it but the bare fact that they were baptized. Precisely the same thing is said of the multitudes who flocked to John in the wilderness of Judea.

But it is surely inconceivable that this identity of language could be employed, if from being a mere sign before, the rite had now, and on this very occasion for the first time, become the channel of forgiveness and spiritual life.

What, however, in this instance is only implied, though so implied as to forbid a doubt, in another is expressly declared. This is the case of the Samaritans, which furnishes the most decisive evidence that the gift of the Spirit is not the inseparable accompaniment of baptism. For after the Samaritans had believed the things spoken by Philip concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and in consequence of their faith had submitted to the rite, the historian informs us that, "as yet the Holy Ghost was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus." To Cornelius and his company the Spirit was given even before the ordinance was administered. It was while the Apostle was preaching that the Holy Ghost fell on them: "*Then* answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?" Indeed before this it was said of Cornelius by a messenger from heaven, that his prayers and his alms were come up for a memorial before God—a testimony of Divine approval which implies a deeply religious spirit. There is, in truth, no example of baptism given in the New Testament, of which the history lends the slightest countenance to the conclusion, that the subject was regenerated by the service.

All experience is in harmony with the facts of Scripture. Though it were possible for an ingenious criticism to extract from particular texts a feeble and reluctant support to the doctrine in question, yet no device or rigour of self-interrogation could draw from the records of a past or from the riches of a present experience the least corroboration of

their testimony. In every case consciousness is wholly silent, because in every case it is wholly unaware of the pretended result. True it may be said, the infant, being incapable of intelligent acts, is *necessarily* ignorant of any regenerative process taking place at the time of its baptism. But even with respect to this class of subjects, it might be expected that the benefit supposed to be received would more commonly develop itself in the subsequent character. If sins are remitted and the seeds of goodness implanted in baptism, how is it that the natural growth of this communicated grace is not generally witnessed in after life, especially in those communities where the rite is administered in the full costume of canonical authority? Our Lord says, "A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit;" and the offices of the Established Church instruct every administrator of baptism, to give hearty thanks that it hath pleased God to regenerate the infant baptized with his Holy Spirit: but surely, if this regeneration were a personal reality, the tree made good by it would, according to the principle stated by Christ, more frequently evince its change of nature by bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit.

Supposing, however, the objection valid and complete for infancy; it applies only to infancy. But the very same ignorance of spiritual results from baptism which, because of its undeveloped consciousness, is inevitable to the child, is also and equally found in the adult, in whom there is every natural qualification for a discriminating judgment. Generally speaking, an adult does not apply for baptism, nor is he thought in a condition to receive it, until, as in the case of the multitudes at the Pentecost, the word of God spoken to his conscience has awakened him to deep religious conviction. He is, indeed, required by the English

Prayer Book, to be "sufficiently instructed in the principles of the Christian religion, and to be prepared with prayers and fasting for the receiving of this holy sacrament." But when in this state, the process of conversion must have fairly commenced, and even considerably advanced. Does baptism then complete the work in actual justification and renewal? If so, it cannot well be without the subject's knowledge; experience must have some approving testimony to give, particularly as the bishop of Exeter tells us, that baptism is included under the phrase "justified by faith" in Rom. vi., and the fruit of this is expressly said to be "peace with God."* But where is the witness who will furnish this corroborative evidence? Many by believing in Christ have found peace with God, but who by baptism has consciously obtained this blessing? Many can fix upon some particular occasion as that on which the change in their character became so decided, that old things passed away, and all things became new; but who with intelligent recollectedness can trace backward to the circumstance of his baptism the renewing of his nature by the gift of the Holy Ghost? The question admits of only one answer; for no one, whether Jew or Gentile, whether born in Christian or heathen lands, ever pretends that, in receiving the Sacrament which visibly connects him with the Church of Christ, and apart from the grace which is specially granted to his faith, he can discover any spiritual operation, or detect any realized change of heart, by virtue of which he is entitled to call himself a new creature.

What is true of Baptism is true also of the Eucharist. A similar appeal to experience must meet with a similar answer. Practically this answer is given in many cases, when perhaps theoretically it would be denied. No indivi-

* Pastoral Letter, p. 23, 1851.

dual approaching the table of the Lord and professedly commemorating His death, no one even believing that there he literally eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of Man,—can assure himself by a distinct recognition of of any spiritual advantage from the service, which cannot, as to its conditional instrumentality, be referred to the exercise of a well-instructed and purifying faith. Great undoubtedly is the blessedness to be obtained there. We are there made partakers of the altar, and so of the sacrifice. What the sacrifice was designed to be that it becomes to us, inward nourishment and life. But it becomes this consciously, and by an inward participation. The blessedness obtained is enjoyed and known; not secretly given and received. The nourishment is felt in added strength, and the life in quickened emotion; and the whole experience is directly traceable to a process in which the agency of man intelligently concurs with the power of God. Let the testimony of personal piety be admitted in the argument, and it will be found that in neither Sacrament is a grace received, which at any time can be identified in the consciousness of the individual as grace conveyed “in a separate and transcendent manner,” by some mysterious capability in the Sacraments themselves; nor in fact any blessing obtained, which a careful consideration of the circumstances of its communication cannot associate with moral purpose and effort as the immediate conditions of its gift.

Should it be said, as it is said, that experience is not a fair criterion of the truth on this question—that the grace of the Sacraments is imparted by a “mysterious operation of the Holy Spirit which cannot be discovered in its effects,” and does not therefore appear in any act or state of the conscious mind—the statement would only illustrate, what observation so commonly teaches, that one error generally

requires a second to excuse or defend it. After every allowance for the secrecy with which the Spirit operates, it is scarcely to be supposed that his presence is undiscoverable in his greatest work. Or if this be conceded, the work itself must surely be perceived and known. If it cannot be, then it does not exist. We hold it as certain, that any change in man's nature which, according to any legitimate construction of the terms, has the effect of making him a new creature, must be an object of real, though it may be imperfect, cognition; and that no change affecting his moral position, much less his moral character, can be of any value to him which does not realize itself in some form of inward conviction and experience. Nothing can strictly be called a benefit but that which elevates the nature or improves the condition of the subject: but to elevate the nature of man is to strengthen and raise to a higher sphere of action his intellectual and moral powers; and to improve his condition is to multiply his facilities for attaining the true ends of his being. In either case a self-conscious and intelligent capability is implied, and in either case this capability is called into exercise. The communicated benefit is not a secret but a service, if mysteriously given yet knowingly possessed. To say that a blessing is imparted and not enjoyed, especially that a great spiritual change is wrought and not perceived, is to say that man ceases to be himself, or at least, that he is acted upon otherwise than according to the just order and natural development of his powers. It is therefore to say that he is profited and not profited at the same time, that he receives a good which is virtually no good at all; for to creatures like ourselves that can hardly be called a good, certainly not a blessing of any moral value, which is not intelligently apprehended and felt.

It may be safely affirmed, for both reason and Scripture unite in the statement, that the soul cannot be effectually wrought upon, either to conversion in the first instance, or to subsequent edification and comfort, without the concurring activity of its own particular powers. This is so obvious that, but for the question under review, the observation would be almost needless. Nor let the breadth of the terms *conversion* and *edification* be accepted as a ground for acquiescence in this remark, while a secret exception is reserved for the act which does not cover the whole extent of their meaning. The principle is intended to apply to every inward renewal—every purgation from original or contracted sin, by which the individual becomes in any true sense acceptable to God. The doctrine of Sacramental efficacy seems founded on the notion, it certainly suggests the notion, that Divine grace is a kind of subtle energy mysteriously infused into the mind, and operating like some invisible essence, as if by mechanical or chemical law. Rhetorically it may be permitted thus to speak of it, but not in strict propriety. The language of physics is imperfectly adapted to the expression of purely religious ideas. Man is chiefly a spiritual intelligence, and therefore grace must be thought of as a spiritual influence, having an exclusively spiritual action. According to which view its office must be intelligently construed as that of a power operating to the production of intelligent results; uniting itself to the several faculties of the soul, so as to raise the higher out of their depression and bondage to an habitual ascendancy over the lower; purging and strengthening the mental eye to a vivid perception of Divine realities, so as to give that profound approval and love of them, and of Him who is the centre and sum of them, which constitutes the very substance of personal godliness; and thus, as if by a

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 his good pleasure."
 The nature of the change itself in every stage of its
 progress from the first pulsations to the fullest maturity of
 the divine life, is of a character to require with the know-
 ledge of its existence the undoubted co-operation of its
 subject.*

Regeneration—the thing actually meant by the
 term—is not a mystic ablution of the soul, of which the
 process as well as the meaning is perfectly set forth in the
 baptism of an unconscious infant; but rather a real and,
 therefore, a realized conversion of it from evil to good. The
 word itself occurs but twice in the New Testament; the
 idea intended, the renovation of heart it expresses, is of
 frequent occurrence.* It is presented in almost every
 variety of form, and always with a fulness and decision of
 language which forbid the vague and indeterminate sense

* The first of the two instances is given in Matt. xix. 28. "Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration, when the Son of Man shall sit in the throne of his glory," &c. In this connexion the term has plainly an economical signification, as in no allowable sense could it be said of the Apostles that they followed Christ in the new birth. It refers, according as it is joined by punctuation to what precedes or follows, to the new state of things introduced by the Gospel, or to that grand renovation of all things which shall form the end and sequel of the resurrection. It is a new birth not of persons but of a universe: "He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new."—The second instance is found in Titus iii. 5. "According to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration," &c. This is considered in another place.

of the term demanded by the dogma of baptismal regeneration. Though figuratively described as a washing away of inward defilement, it really is the production of a new temper and habit of mind. The spirit, to use the frequent distinction of St. Paul, is raised to a preponderance of inclination and power over the flesh; so that the will, hitherto enslaved to evil, is delivered from its bondage and empowered, as if under a new constitution of the soul, "to perform that which is good." If, indeed, there is any propriety in the term at all, if regeneration bears any decided analogy to ordinary generation, it must be a change of vast and universal importance.

"Spiritual life is life essentially and eminently; and we are as truly produced, or generated, as to our spiritual being, by the redemptive Spirit, as we are the offspring of our natural parents, in respect of our human nature. How is God *spiritually* Father to the human soul? Is he not *in this sense* our Father, when of His own will He has begotten us with the word of truth—created us again—in his image, the similitude of his own divine perfections? If spiritual regeneration corresponds to merely human generation, it can be no less than a reproduction of the soul, a reformation of it in all its parts and faculties, a re-creation whereby it becomes a spiritual being, as it was not a spiritual being from the first. He who has been *born of God*, must have the nature of God, as he who has been born of man has the nature of man. And if goodness and holiness, the same in kind as that of which He has implanted the idea within us, is essential to the nature of God, which no man who takes the Bible to be God's word can deny, he who has the nature of God raised up within him must be upon the whole pure and good, and this in a positive, not a merely negative sense—actually, not in a

mere potential signification. How can a man become actually a son of God by a mystical change, which merely gives him the *capability* of acquiring the divine nature in all its moral excellence, whensoever his will co-operates with the Spirit?"* The same Apostle, who delights to speak of conversion as a new birth, describes it also as a passing from death unto life. The idea is not peculiar to any one inspired writer. Frequently the two states of man, before and after his conversion, are spoken of respectively as death and life. "You hath he quickened," says St. Paul, "who were dead in trespasses and sins." In his natural state man's heart beats, so far as it beats at all, falsely, under evil stimulus, and towards a wrong object: its proper action is suspended, or rather destroyed. This is death, because the absence of that divine life which crowns and consecrates all other life, and forms the chief distinction and blessedness of man *as* man. In other words, the carnal mind is enmity against God, and to be carnally minded is death. The opposite therefore is life; a heart, that is, beating truly, under holy excitement, with generous ardour, and towards a glorious object,—this, the spiritual mind, is life and peace. Now regeneration is the process of transition from one state to another: it is the coming into a new existence; the passing, as John expressively defines it, from death unto life.

If this is regeneration (and Christian experience knows no other), the conclusion obviously and inevitably is, that regeneration is not a mystic cleansing of the soul of which the subject possesses no knowledge and can render no account, but such a change of man's whole nature as reveals itself to his personal consciousness, and demands for its production the active though subordinate co-operation of

* Coleridge. *Aids to Reflection*. Vol. ii. 263.

his several powers. The raising of the spirit to habitual ascendancy over the flesh—the empowering of the will to throw off the dominion of error and to exult in the freedom of truth—the putting on of the new man created in righteousness and true holiness—the translation of the soul from darkness to light, from enmity to love, from the power of Satan unto God—or however else the work of regeneration may be described, is plainly nothing so occult that human intelligence has no concern in it, but something of which the knowledge is implied in the very fact of its existence, and the existence is conceivable only in connexion with actual desire and effort. This is true even of Dr. Pusey's definition, according to which regeneration is “that act whereby God takes us out of our relation to Adam and makes us actual members of His Son, and so His sons, as being members of His ever-blessed Son; and if sons, then heirs of God through Christ. This,” he continues, “is our new birth, an actual birth of God, of water and the Spirit, as we were actually born of our natural parents; herein then also are we justified, or both accounted and made righteous, since we are made members of Him who is alone righteous; freed from past sin, whether original or actual,”* &c. Whatever else may be included in this definition, the idea of *moral renovation* is inseparable from it, and moral renovation naturally supposes the activity of moral powers. Man cannot it is true in the first instance give life to himself. Dead in trespasses and in sins he would ever remain so, but for a revivifying agency from without. The first quickening impulse comes from the Holy Spirit, and the life imparted is sustained incessantly by influence from him. But this does not imply, much less necessitate, the passivity of the mind which receives the grace. Neither im-

* Tract on Baptism, p. 23.

tence nor indifference can be ascribed to the will, and unless the will put forth its self-determining power, the moral goodness which enters essentially into the scriptural view of regeneration can never be attained. The influence employed does not act upon a substance whose plastic quality can only receive and retain impressions, but upon a nature whose prerogative it is to spring forward and welcome the gracious gift, to assist the action upon itself of any external force, and thus to facilitate its whole design, by acting in perfect concert with it. Only in figure is the soul either clay to be moulded or a vessel to be filled. Really it is a simple intelligence, a spiritual power of unceasing activity; "and the Holy Spirit acts upon it by exciting it to act in return, as the strings of a harp vibrate under the harper's hand, or those of an Æolian lute at the impulse of a passing breeze."

In strict agreement with these observations, and as a further proof of our doctrine, is the fact, that in Scripture the communication of Divine grace is suspended on conditions which pre-suppose and require the exercise of the understanding and the will. No statement is ever made which can justify the insulation of these faculties from their associated affections in the reception of spiritual good; none which can be construed into a proof that "the natural entry of grace into the soul of man is by the affections, and anterior to the action of the understanding upon the subject."* Such a statement if found would little accord with our experience, and instead of indicating the "*natural entry*" of grace into the heart would seem directly opposed to it, as the order of nature is to unite reflection to faith and intelligence to emotion, making one serve as the minister of the other; which order is plainly set forth in the prayer of

* Gladstone. Church Principles. p. 84.

the Apostle, "Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus Christ our Lord." All the great blessings of the new covenant, from pardon up to the highest gift of sanctification, are granted on the preliminary conditions of repentance towards God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. And the conditions are not an arbitrary appointment: they have their reason in the very nature of man; for viewing him morally and intellectually, especially as depraved in heart, it is difficult to see how in their absence any communication from God could be realized as a strictly spiritual advantage. Christ is first made unto us *wisdom*, then righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. St. Paul teaches, "We have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand;" by which grace is meant generally the grace of the evangelical economy, but particularly that of a sinner's justification through the merit of the Crucified. But faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God; and as faith and hearing are eminently acts of the will the reception of the grace must involve a purely personal agency. Regeneration, we have seen, is the coming into a new life, a birth of man's spirit into the likeness and therefore into the family of God: but this is said to be affected instrumentally by "the word of the truth of the Gospel," and so not independently of the concurring activity of the subject. The theology of the Old Testament taught, "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple: the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." That of the New is not different. James says, "Of His own will begat He us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures:" with whose words those of Peter strikingly agree;

"Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." And of this imperishable seed John declares that it remaineth where it takes root, abides as a germinant power in the heart, preserving the newly begotten life, so that the man who has received it cannot sin.* If it be said, as Tractarian exposition has said, that by the *word of God* is meant not the separate instrumentality of divine truth in the work of regeneration, but comprehensively the whole economy of the Gospel, the answer is given in the statement of Peter, as if by anticipation, immediately after the passage quoted from him: "And this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."

In the account of the assembly convened at Jerusalem to consider the question of imposing on Gentile converts the obligation of the Jewish ritual, we read of God's "giving the Gentiles the Holy Spirit, *purifying their hearts by faith*;" in which this is observable, that Peter, who bears this testimony, refers the purification spoken of, which is doubtless synonymous with regeneration, not to any external service, but to the faith which has divine truth for its object. So the Apostle John in assigning the reason for writing his Gospel says, "These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Here the same order is suggested, and the same process is implied: truth—faith—life. The word is first given; this read or heard is apprehended by faith; and, applied "in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," becomes instrumental to a new life. With these passages, especially that in which the word of God is called "incorruptible seed," compare our Lord's parable of the sower; his address to

* James i. 18. 1 Pet. i. 23, 25. 1 John iii. 9.

the disciples, "Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you;" and his declaration to the Jews, "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life,"

In every instance the same instruction is given, as in every instance a similar office is ascribed to the word in regenerating the heart. In Ephesians i. 13, the renewing of the mind is beautifully described as a sealing by the Holy Spirit of promise; the effect produced by his grace is that of an impression transferred from a seal to a soft and yielding substance. The Spirit comes into such contact with the heart that he leaves on its softened and pliant affections a fair copy of himself, and thus marks the believer's consecration to God. But the sealing is effected with the knowledge and consent of the person sealed. It is not only associated in the Apostle's statement with truth and faith, but is said to take place after the hearing of the one and the exercise of the other. "In whom (that is, Christ) ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." Here is first hearing of the word, then trusting in Christ, afterwards the signature of the Spirit. A similar arrangement of means is presented in that passage of noble and transcendent beauty, which describes the Gospel as a mirror so powerfully resplendent with the glory of God, that it changes the person looking into it to a corresponding glory.* The effect is directly attributed to the Spirit of the Lord, but the Spirit operating on a mind consciously active—"beholding with open face the glory of the Lord." In a word, all access to the Divine Being, and therefore all vital relationship to him, is obtained, where personal agency

* 2 Cor. iii. 18.

is possible, only by faith,—“For he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him.” It is unnecessary to adduce other texts, though the illustration might be greatly extended.

Scripture is everywhere consistent with itself. Its doctrine is uniformly the same, and this doctrine is, that regeneration is not the mystic cleansing of the soul from original or contracted guilt, of which cleansing or guilt the subject has no knowledge; not the secret infusion of a divine virtue which cannot or may not even in its effects be recognised in the personal consciousness; but a change from darkness to light, from evil to good, in which, throughout the whole process, the intelligent activity of man concurs with the vital efficiency of the Holy Spirit.

Still no agreement of Scriptural testimonies in support of this view of the question, will probably be deemed a sufficient answer to the theory of regeneration by baptism, as founded on the language of our Lord to Nicodemus: “Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.” This, with the corresponding passage in Titus iii. 5, is the chosen and confessedly best defence of the theory. It does not however, we believe, in the least disturb that harmony of Divine teaching respecting the conditions of the new birth, which we have just asserted to exist. It lends no sanction whatever to the doctrine of regeneration by baptism.

We have already adopted that interpretation of the passage which identifies birth by water with baptism. This, apart from the preference that is due to a literal before a figurative sense, where the latter is not necessary, is the most easy and natural construction. Coupled with the demand for a spiritual birth, it meets the whole case of

Nicodemus, his dread of exposure as well as his need of conversion. It requires of him that he put aside his fears and avow his convictions; that he come to Jesus not secretly by night, but openly by public profession.

Now observe, first, that this is the only instance in which our Lord is supposed to have taught regeneration by baptism. In none of his many discourses preserved by the evangelists is there found, or believed to be found, any other announcement of the doctrine. Observe further, that this announcement is made not publicly but privately, not to a large assembly but to a single individual. Observe again, that the instruction is addressed not to the Apostles in a charge on special discourse, intended to regulate their own faith, or to guide them in their subsequent ministries as the founders of churches and the first preachers of the Gospel, but to a ruler of the Jews who sought a secret interview with Jesus, and who never, so far as we know, openly proclaimed himself a disciple, much less became a teacher of Christian truth. And yet it is on this single declaration, made on such an occasion, and to such a person, that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is based! But weightier objections present themselves.

We have before seen that baptismal regeneration commences at the Pentecost with the gift of the Spirit. Up to this period, it is universally admitted, the thing was unknown. It was therefore unknown at the time of the interview between Nicodemus and our Lord. The Spirit was not then given, nor was he given for some time afterwards. Nevertheless Jesus said to the Jewish ruler, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." This language was not a general statement without a particular application. It was addressed specially to Nico-

demus himself—"I say unto *thee*"—was intended to meet his own case, and to impress him with what was indispensable to his own salvation. Did our Lord then insist upon that which he knew to be impossible? If not, how can baptismal regeneration be fairly inferred from his words? If he did not require of Nicodemus that he should be baptismally regenerated, then he does not teach that baptismal regeneration is necessary to enter into the kingdom of God. Let it not be said that the statement of Christ had a future reference, and was prophetically rather than presently declarative—affirming rather what would be than what was already necessary. Nicodemus could not be supposed to know the meaning of such language, nor any one else perhaps, until Pentecost itself had supplied the true interpretation. Yet that he ought to have understood the declaration actually made, and was really censurable for his ignorance, is evident from the inquiry, "Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?" It was plainly his fault that he did not enter into the import of the Saviour's words, but it could hardly have been so had they required for their exposition the descent of the Holy Spirit. Whatever the birth of water may mean it was something required personally of Nicodemus: for the same reasons it must have been required of all others, and hence of those who during the lifetime of Jesus did enter into the kingdom of God. But if baptismal regeneration was then impossible, neither the Jewish ruler nor those who preceded him could enjoy this blessing, or be expected to seek it. It must therefore have been possible to enter into the kingdom of God without it, as multitudes had already done so; but if possible our Lord cannot be understood to insist upon its necessity. Either baptismal regeneration was possible, or it was not taught. These are the only alternatives.

As the former is not acknowledged, the latter must be admitted.

The doctrine of the disciple cannot be at variance with that of the Master. If the view we have taken of the Saviour's words to Nicodemus be correct, a similar view must be taken of the Apostle's words to Titus. These words are the following: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." In this, as in the previous instance, we regard the first operation mentioned, "the washing of regeneration," as referring to Christian baptism. This is not only the catholic, but, as it seems to us, the most natural interpretation. Two complete sets of expression, the one figurative the other literal, would not in all likelihood be employed for the same thing. The Holy Ghost may be symbolised as fire or as water, as in the promise, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire," but regeneration in the spiritual sense would not probably be described first as a baptism and then as a renewal. . At all events, there is in the present instance no necessity for this two-fold representation, the less so as the passage is much fuller and more suggestive in its double application. If it be objected that this exposition attributes salvation to baptism as well as to Divine influence, the answer is, that it does this only in the sense in which our Lord required Nicodemus to be born of water, and said to his Apostles, "He that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved;" and especially only in the sense in which the Apostle makes confession necessary to salvation, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved."* It cannot be

* Romans x. 9.

said that confession itself has the power to save, or the power to produce the faith which is followed by salvation; nor for similar reasons can it be said that baptism alone is effectual to regenerate, or to ensure the Spirit in his regenerating presence. In both cases the confession and the rite serve the same end. They are the outward expression and sign of inward spiritual realities; not productive of them, nor necessarily connected with them, but expressive by Divine appointment of their existence, or character, or both.

Thus understood, the passage is strikingly parallel to that in John. The terms admit of the strictest comparison. Birth by water is represented by the washing of regeneration, and birth by the Spirit by the renewing of the Holy Ghost. The similarity of language demands a similarity of exposition. One doctrine is common both to Gospel and Epistle. If baptismal regeneration is taught by Jesus, it is also taught by Paul; if not by the former, then not by the latter. It is therefore, as we have seen, taught by neither.

So far as the words of the Apostle are peculiar they are additionally in our favour. They distinguish by a marked decision of phrase between ritual baptism and moral renovation. They do not, as our Lord does in John, include both under one general term. The washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost are too distinct to be confounded or identified. They suggest, by the completeness and yet difference of their expression, not only a difference and possible separation, but also a perfect independence of the two operations. The term *κατεργασια*, translated regeneration, is remarkable. Whatever it means in this connexion, it is never elsewhere employed for personal purification. United to the term washing, it cannot signify the washing which produces regeneration, for this result is

immediately afterwards, in a separate phrase, attributed to the Holy Ghost. If referring to *individual* baptism at all, it is but another expression for Christian baptism, describing the washing as that of regeneration, not because the ablution is the cause of regeneration, but because it is the distinctive and obligatory sign of it. But the term *πalingενεσία* may have a general rather than a particular application, corresponding to its import in Matt. xix, 28. This is the only other place of its occurrence, and here it undoubtedly refers to that grand and glorious renovation of things otherwise described as the kingdom of God. If in Titus the word is used in this sense, as seems not improbable, then the washing of regeneration denotes not the ablution of any one in particular, but baptism as the appointed ordinance of the Christian Church; and the Apostle is thus understood to teach, what beautifully falls in with the general voice of Scripture, that the means of salvation are not works of human righteousness, but the outward profession of Christ by baptism, and the inward sanctification of the heart by the Spirit. According to no legitimate interpretation does he affirm that regeneration is effected by baptism.

This also is true of Peter in a passage which, though often quoted in proof of the efficacy of baptism, is directly against it. "The like figure whereunto baptism doth also now save us, not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."* The reference to baptism in this case is obviously incidental, being suggested by the connexion rather than intended as a topic of discourse. The Apostle, referring to the general deluge, observes that "few; that is, eight souls were saved by water." The mention of salvation by water naturally brought to his mind

* 1 Pet. iii. 21.

the use of water in relation to a higher salvation ; and hence he adds, " Whereunto," that is, unto which water, " the like figure," or rather as it really is, " The antitype baptism doth also now save us." We take the word baptism in the literal sense, and understand Peter as stating, that the water of the flood is the type of which the water of baptism is the antitype, and that the salvation of Noah and his family is related by a further resemblance to the salvation of believers in general. Now if the antitype is to be construed into any intelligible agreement with the type,—if the salvation of Christians by baptism must be viewed as at all corresponding to the deliverance of the patriarch and his children by the deluge,—a very slender foundation is laid in this passage for the support of the dogma under consideration. Let the type be well understood. Noah and his family were saved : but how ? Not surely by the instrumentality of water, especially in that sense in which instrumentality is claimed for the waters of baptism. In the absence of water they were not in danger, and could not therefore strictly be saved by it. The water was not for deliverance, but for destruction ; it was water in a " flood brought upon the world of the ungodly," to overwhelm it. But if the eight souls were not saved by means of the deluge, neither, on the ground of the resemblance in which the argument consists, can believers be saved by means of baptism. If the water fails as an instrument of salvation in the type, it must, by the very requirement of the figure, also fail as an instrument of salvation in the antitype. So that whatever may be the exact import of the Apostle's words, unless it can be shewn that the deluge preserved Noah and his family, it cannot be shewn that baptism regenerates us or our children.

The resemblance must not be pushed beyond the limits of

just comparison. The less must this be attempted as baptism is introduced by Peter only incidentally and relatively, and not with any view to a strict and formal definition. In both the cases mentioned there is salvation, and in both the presence and use of water; but in neither is salvation *by* water as the efficient instrument, or in any sense which gives to water the power to save; but only through or in such connexion with it as in each instance the salvation renders possible or naturally suggests. To what extent this possibility reaches in respect to baptism is plainly told in the added explanation, "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God." Most positively is it here said that it is not an ablution with water that saves us, but that answer of a good conscience towards God which is wholly inward and spiritual. The contrast thus expressed implies both distinction and separation. The two things are entirely different, of immensely unequal importance, and may in any case have no connexion. The exact import of *επερώτημα*; translated *answer*, it may be difficult to determine; but whether it be rendered demand, or profession, or stipulation, or all together, the conclusion remains uninjured.*

* The term itself signifies properly a demand or inquiry, and is thought to refer to the profession of faith required of a convert at baptism. But question and answer are relative terms, and in this instance the word can mean question only as implying answer, as it refers exclusively to those to whom the question is addressed. Question is used by metonymy instead of answer, because it presupposes the answer and gives occasion to it. Some propose to regard the term as equivalent to examination, including both question and answer; others as one with stipulation, expressing the engagement of the candidate to renounce the devil and all his works; and others again in the sense of inquiry, longing after God, or petition to him—that is, for salvation. In every case however, conformably to the requirement of the text, the word is viewed as expressing nothing merely professional and outward, but something.

Through every possible rendering the design of the Apostle is visible at a glance. It was to set forth the spiritual character of the baptismal service in opposition to that which is only external and sensible; to distinguish the ritual from the moral, by marking the inefficiency of the one and the value and necessity of the other. But this supposes that the two are not invariably connected. If the answer of a good conscience toward God were inseparable from the putting away of the filth of the flesh, there would have been no need for the broad and formal distinction between them. Had regeneration always been associated with baptism, the Apostle would not have said, what he now does say, that we are saved not by outward but by inward cleansing, not by the baptism of water but by the sanctification of the Spirit.

These are the principal passages adduced in support of baptismal regeneration. Indeed the first two, John iii. 5, and Titus iii. 5, are those on which the greatest reliance is placed, as they are supposed to teach the doctrine most explicitly. Others, however, as corroborative testimonies, are appealed to; the great commission, for instance; the command of Annanias to Paul to wash away his sins; the statement of the Apostle that Christ loved his Church and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word; and, what is still more extraordinary, a number of passages from the Old Testament which are said to cast a prophetic look forward to the times of the Gospel, and in some cases to express

deeply spiritual and inward. Nearly all possible renderings are represented in the several English versions of the New Testament. "The asking of a good conscience in God."—*Wiclif*. "In that a good conscience consenteth unto God."—*Tyndale and Cranmer*. "In that a good conscience maketh request to God."—*Geneva*. "The examination of a good conscience toward God."—*Rheims*.

the ardent desire of the writer to bathe in the purifying waters of a laver not yet provided but seen in the vivid light of a transporting inspiration;—such, for example, as the following: “Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doing from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do well;” “Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters;” “Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow;” “As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God;” and a number of others, which only by the triumph of fancy over reason, and hypothesis over criticism, can be coerced into the slightest bearing on the question. Not the most plausible of these passages can be said to have an independent value. No separate testimony can be extracted from them in favour of the view they are employed to defend. They may afterwards be thought of as coincidences, but cannot in the stress of the argument be cited as proofs. Whatever authority they are supposed to possess they derive it reflectively, by the mere circumstance of analogous expression, from texts more apparently to the purpose than themselves. But these texts, we have seen, lend no countenance to baptismal regeneration, and, failing in support from these, the doctrine can be established on no other.

Our general conclusion then is left unaffected by seemingly opposite instruction. The Scriptures thought to contain the greatest weight of adverse testimony, are found to be in perfect agreement with it. The word of God is consistent with itself, uniformly speaking the same language. There are not two kinds of regeneration, primary and secondary; and not two processes of renewing agency, taking place on wholly different conditions, and adapted separately to the conscious and the unconscious mind.

Regeneration is one, ever evincing its divine origin by the divine impress it leaves on the character. It is a birth from above, accompanied for that reason by the privilege of adoption, and also by the proof of sonship in the witnessing presence of the Holy Spirit. This regeneration is effected not secretly, apart from the knowledge and action of the subject; but though mysteriously yet concurrently with the exercise of man's affections and will. It is consciously acquired and consciously enjoyed, developed in the experience and attested by the life. *As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God*, says one Apostle. A second affirms, *Every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him*.

The principle of these remarks applies to the whole of the Christian life, and therefore addresses itself to the question of eucharistic as well as to that of baptismal efficacy. What is true of regeneration is true of spiritual proficiency in general—of that divine nurture and growth by which the soul is strengthened to a vigorous manhood, and made perfect in every good work.

The grace of God is at once the source and the support of life. Necessary at the commencement it is equally necessary at every step of the progress, and the ripest attainment in piety is but the richest fruit of grace. It is ever "God who worketh in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure." It never ceases to be true that "apart from Christ," severed as a branch from the vine, "we can do nothing." So that whatever the accumulations of Christian experience or the perfections of Christian holiness, the believer is constrained to acknowledge, "By the grace of God I am what I am." But this grace operates on a consenting will, and becomes effective only in connexion with

a believing heart. However profound the mystery which envelopes their union, the Divine is inseparable from the human in the work of individual salvation, and though it is impossible to trace out their separate influences so as to mark the particular action of each upon the other, yet the human must ever be thought of as intelligently associated with the Divine. And this must be the human not of the Church, represented by its priesthood in the administration of appointed rites,—“the Church as the store-house and direct channel of grace, as a divine ordinance which conveys secret strength and life to every one who shares in it,”*—but the human of individual faith and prayer and self communion and holy living. If not man loses in the very highest sphere of his activity, the sphere of religion, much of his distinctive personality, and religion itself, instead of being a moral power and blessedness, derived immediately from the Saviour, and preserved and strengthened by “always abounding in the work of the Lord,” becomes a mere sentiment of reliance, evinced it may be in the strictest formality of worship, on the virtue of sacramental privilege and of Church incorporation.

For this consequence, indeed, Anglo-Catholicism is not wholly unprepared; for, speaking of the orthodox theology, it complains: “We have almost embraced the doctrine, that God conveys grace only through the instrumentality of the mental energies, that is, through faith, prayer, active and spiritual contemplations, or (what is called) communion with God, in contradiction to the primitive view, according to which

* Tracts for the Times. Adv. to Vol. ii. “It is in the Church,” says Mr. Gladstone, “that we have our religious life derived to us, not as individuals, but by virtue of incorporation into her body.” “God has not chosen to establish his relations with each of us on a distinct and individual footing, but has constituted us in a body, to derive from its source of life a portion of its general life.”—*Church Principles*, p. p. 5, 117.

the Church and her Sacraments are the ordained and direct, visible means of conveying to the soul what is in itself supernatural and unseen.* This if the primitive is certainly not the Scriptural view. No such office is assigned to the Church in the New Testament, the less so as in this connexion Church is vaguely used for clergy. It cannot well have any other meaning; for the same authority tells us that the Sacraments, and not preaching, are the sources of Divine grace, and yet maintains that the efficacy of the Sacraments depends on the Apostolic succession of those who administer them. But in Scripture an individual is never so merged in the Church that his salvation becomes in any sense a corporate or a priestly salvation. He stands in no such relation to it as a child to its mother. Though one of a body, it is not a body from which he derives life or strength or any blessing, save as Christian association is the appointed means of Christian profit. His relationship to Christ is direct and distinctly personal, and it is only as he "abides in" Him by distinctly personal acts and habits that he receives nourishment and brings forth fruit. To all his people the Redeemer is the vine, and they as the branches are immediately connected with him, enter as it were into him, and draw their support at once from him.

The Sacraments are undoubtedly important means of grace, but are rendered such by no prerogative of Church authority or of priestly ordination. They avail nothing of themselves, nothing as the Sacraments of the Church, nothing as administered with Apostolic sanction, nothing on any ecclesiastical grounds whatever. They are means of grace, not as vehicles and conveyances of secret gifts, implying simple receptivity in the persons observing them, but as occasions of Divine communication to him

* Tracts for the Times. See above.

whose soul is brought by prayer and faith and earnest desire into full agreement with their nature and design—to him, that is, who perceives the truth they signify and claims the promise they seal. On its own account, and independently of positive moral conditions in the subject, Baptism, we have seen, has no power to purify or quicken; and for similar reasons the Eucharist has no influence to invigorate and nurture.

The Lord's Supper is to every one very much what himself makes it. There is no divine virtue in it, "present after some transcendental manner," which even what is called a "fit reception" is competent to realize. Christ is present, either bodily or by his Spirit; if in the latter sense a spiritual participation alone is possible, and this on purely spiritual terms. The feast is one of fat things only where there is the hand of faith to take and eat, and the excitement of desire to enjoy and assimilate. In all the instructions for its observance given in the New Testament there is implied, sometimes strongly expressed, the full responsibility of intelligent action and of individual will. "This do," says the Redeemer, "in remembrance of me;" by which remembrance nothing less can be meant than a believing recognition of Christ as the Mediator between God and man, and the acceptance in the ordinance itself of his sacrifice as the only ground of reconciliation and peace. The command can be fully obeyed only by the utmost energy of meditative thought, and the liveliest exercise of grateful and adoring love. The Saviour must be vividly brought before the mind, distinctly seen in his redeeming character and work, and realized as a spiritual power and presence by that faith which pierces the mere veils and tokens of things, and looks and lives on that which is unseen and eternal. But this excludes, certainly does not

favour, the idea of efficacy in the rite itself. It gives but little encouragement to the belief that the most regular and unexceptionable administration of it is a direct conveyance of spiritual gifts, implying, as it plainly does imply, that grace is received, where received at all, in a sense consistent with purely mental operations, and on terms demanding the fullest and freest activity both of mind and heart.

Such also is the instruction of the Apostle.* He tells us in effect that a participation with Christ in this Sacrament can be enjoyed only as we eat and drink worthily; but this worthiness of celebration includes more than the absence of what is called mortal sin, more than the removal of certain moral impediments, more even than a simple pliancy and receptiveness of disposition. It includes, according to his own account, a just discrimination of the nature of the ordinance itself, a faithful process of self-examination, a distinct remembrance and acknowledgment of the Saviour in his sacrificial sufferings, and a grateful looking forward to his second coming, as that by which the vital communion established with him through his first appearing shall be consummated in the blessedness of his immediate presence. It therefore supposes not only a certain seriousness of temper and correctness of evangelical sentiment, but also a vigorous exercise of the understanding and the will, combined with the utmost animation and ardour of religious desire. But all this implies a very different view of the Supper from that which makes it a vehicle and conveyance of the gifts of Divine grace. It lends no countenance to the doctrine that the ordinance, by virtue of that which itself contains, removes inward pollutions and invigorates the spiritual life. It rather supposes that the grace obtained in it is obtained according

* 1 Cor. xi. 24—29.

to the same method of bestowment, and on the like conditions of reception, as that which is obtained in any other service of Divine appointment, or of religious fitness and propriety. For were it not so obtained—were the Sacrament itself, because of some supernatural presence in it, vitally efficacious—operations of the individual mind like those spoken of as necessary to communion with Christ would only partially if at all be required, as, in the absence of certain moral obstructions, the rite would possess a force and efficiency which such states and acts could not materially increase, nor the want of them seriously impair.

Should it be said that Sacramental efficacy does not dispense with moral qualifications, it will hardly be affirmed that the effect of the ordinance in the communication of Divine blessings can be realized only on such personal conditions of religious exercise as we have above mentioned. These conditions are obviously adapted to quite another mode of imparting spiritual good than that which supposes some peculiar virtue in the outward instrumentality. If however this be asserted, then we demand,—What is the authority for the doctrine at all? Who teaches it, and what is his claim to be heard? Is appeal made to articles and creeds? Not wisely; for these in their truest utterances are only echoes of the voice from heaven, and their value in every case depends on the fidelity with which they repeat its instructions. Is reference made to the Church? But to what Church and to what part of that Church? At most it can be to only one or more of the many communities into which the universal Church is divided. And even with this restriction there must be a yet further limitation, for when in such a reference Church does not definitely mean the clergy, it means only a convenient but unintelligible abstraction. This authority then is plainly

too partial, and if not, too indeterminate and uncertain. Is attention called to the Fathers? With no better result; for these teach differently and contradictorily. And did they teach unanimously and consistently, that would not make their doctrine a sure, much less an ultimate, standard of Christian truth; the value of their teaching, as that of uninspired men, would still be only in the ratio of their piety and learning. They are designated the Fathers of the Church, but they are not, save as their erroneous views have been perpetuated in creed and canon, the Fathers of our faith. They are our Fathers as going before us, and as building up amid much discouragement, and sometimes in tears and blood, the visible structure of the Christian Church; but, unless the past is lost upon us, and man is not "the heir of all the ages," they are not our Fathers in the sense of riper wisdom and a deeper experience.

"The succession of men from one period to another," says Paschal, in a passage which applies as strictly to theology as to philosophy, "should be considered as one man always subsisting and continually learning. Whence we see with how much injustice we venerate antiquity in her philosophers; for, as old age is the age most distant from infancy, who does not see that the old age of this universal man must be sought not in the times nearest his birth, but in those at the greatest distance from it? They whom we designate old were really young in every respect, and formed properly the infancy of mankind; and as we have combined with their attainments the experience of succeeding ages, it is in ourselves that we find the antiquity which we revere in others."*

* The whole passage is worthy of quotation. Il n'en est pas ainsi
 homme, qui n'est produit que pour l'infinité. Il est dans l'igno-

Transubstantiation is the last and complete development of the doctrine we are now considering. Between this and the purely evangelical position, that, namely, which regards the Lord's Supper as a commemorative service, profitable only as spiritual influence is obtained by appropriate spiritual exercises, there is no solid and certain resting place. Both these positions are intelligible and definite, and the only ones that can have this character, but so essentially distinct that the two can never by any approximate resemblance be compromised in a third. A third however is undoubtedly intended by the teaching of Anglo-Catholicism, though a precision of terms in expounding it would probably resolve this attempted compromise into the very

rance au premier âge de sa vie; mais il s'instruit sans cesse dans son progrès: car il tire avantage, non-seulement de sa propre expérience, mais encore de celle de ses prédécesseurs; parce qu'il garde toujours dans sa mémoire les connaissances qu'il s'est une fois acquises, et que celles des anciens lui sont toujours présentes dans les livres qu'ils en ont laissés. Et comme il conserve ces connaissances, il peut aussi les augmenter facilement; de sorte que les hommes sont aujourd'hui en quelque sorte dans le même état où se trouveraient ces anciens philosophes, s'ils pouvaient avoir vieilli jusqu'à présent, en ajoutant aux connaissances qu'ils avaient celles que leurs études auraient pu leur acquérir, à la faveur de tant de siècles. De là vient, que par une prérogative particulière, non-seulement chacun des hommes s'avance de jour en jour dans les sciences, mais que tous les hommes ensemble y font un continuel progrès à mesure que l'univers vieillit, parce que la même chose arrive dans la succession des hommes que dans les âges différents d'un particulier. De sorte que toute la suite des hommes, pendant le cours de tant de siècles, doit être considérée comme un même homme qui subsiste toujours et qui apprend continuellement: d'où l'on voit avec combien d'injustice nous respectons l'antiquité dans ses philosophes; car, comme la vieillesse est l'âge le plus distant de l'enfance, qui ne voit que la vieillesse de cet homme universel ne doit pas être cherchée dans les temps proches de sa naissance, mais dans ceux qui en sont les plus éloignés? Ceux que nous appelons anciens étaient véritablement nouveaux en toutes choses, et formaient l'enfance des hommes proprement; et comme nous avons joint à leurs connaissances l'expérience des siècles qui les ont suivis, c'est en nous que l'on peut trouver cette antiquité que nous révérons dans les autres. Pensées de Paschal. Première partie. Article I.

essence of transubstantiation. The Eucharist, it is said, consists of two parts, a commemorative sacrifice, and a communion, the former obtaining remission of sins for the Church, the latter the strengthening and refreshing of the soul. In one of the Tracts for the Times, Tract 81, this view is attributed to the early Christians, but it is also adopted as the true view. In others it is maintained that, after consecration, there is "a real change in the sacred elements;" that "the consecrated bread is Christ's body;" that his presence in the Sacrament is "real, but not local;"* while the bishop of Oxford, as we have seen, informs us, "that there is a peculiar and supernatural presence of Christ with his people in this holy Sacrament; that in it he does, in and by the fit reception of the consecrated elements, convey to the faithful worshipper the real partaking of his body and his blood, whereby the souls of faithful people are refreshed." This is scarcely a compromise between the two views above referred to. If not popery itself, it may well be taken for its natural offspring, very like it in feature, though somewhat below it in stature.

Now what, we repeat, is the Scriptural authority for this doctrine? For nothing of less authority than Scripture will suffice for its vindication. Is it the words of institution, "This is my body; this is my blood?" Not unless transubstantiation is intended by it, as only two interpretations of this language are conceivable. Either our Lord teaches the transmutation of the elements into the substance of his own person, or he teaches that the elements are symbolical of his body and blood in the sacrifice he is about to present unto God. But the former is repudiated, and the latter admits of no other than a spiritual presence of Christ in the Sacrament. If the elements are only

* See Tract 90.

symbolic, there must be the absence of that which they merely symbolize; and body and spirit exist under conditions so totally distinct, that the body of Jesus cannot, without an absurdity which refutes itself, be said to be really though not locally present, present, that is, and not present at the same time. Body cannot be refined to spirit, nor borrow its mode of subsistence.

Is it the language of the Apostle, where he calls the cup "the communion of the blood of Christ," and the bread "the communion of the body of Christ?"* Not, again we say, unless the cup is literally one with the Saviour's blood, and the bread is identical with his body. If this identity is not pretended, then the only presence of Christ supposable is a spiritual presence, and communion with him is possible only on spiritual conditions. Is it said that the reception of the bread and of the cup is here identified with the communion of the Redeemer's body and blood, so that the very observance becomes the medium of conveying to us directly spiritual gifts? Not surely the mere reception itself, for then even wickedness would be suffered to commune with Christ, but only "the fit reception." But what is a fit reception? That obviously must be determined by the nature of the communion, on the principle that the means must be adapted to the end. Now the communion spoken of is the communion of the Saviour's body and blood, that is of his body as broken, and of his blood as shed; which, again, is communion with him in his redeeming sufferings, so as to participate in the benefits of his death. But how is this communion to be enjoyed except by right apprehensions of his death? And how are these to be obtained unless by the faith which interprets the mystery of the cross, and which identifying the believer

* 1 Cor. x. 16.

with his dying Lord as a sacrifice for sin, and so as his substitute, enables him to say, "I am crucified with Christ?" But if this faith is necessary to a true communion, it must also belong to a fit reception, and then the very principle we advocate is conceded, that spiritual blessings are obtained in the Lord's Supper only on spiritual conditions. The primary design of the Apostle, however, was not to expound the nature of the Sacrament, nor to specify the advantages obtained in it, but to set forth the fellowship of believers in their vital communion with Christ—their (*κοινωνία*) common participation of his body and blood; and he introduces the bread and the cup, of which all partake, as an expressive emblem of this, exhibiting as they do, when jointly taken by a church, the union of its members among themselves, in their still closer union with the crucified Jesus.

Is the proof of this doctrine sought in the memorable discourse of our Lord, in which he proclaims himself the bread of life? * It is certainly not found there. We have before said, and now repeat, that the words of the Saviour appear to have no intended reference to the Eucharist at all. An application to this may be given them, and by it a pertinent and beautiful exposition will sometimes be suggested, but this can hardly be the application originally designed. The Supper was not instituted when the discourse was delivered. Unlike the death of Christ, there could not be, so far as we can judge, any reason for a predictive announcement of it. If there was the announcement given was unaccountably obscure, and impossible to be understood. Moreover, the language had a present reference, and described what was necessary to be *then* done. To the multitude who stood around him Jesus

* John vi. 33—56.

said, "Verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father ; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." Besides, of the Lord's Supper it is not true that "if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever ;" though of Christ generally, in his whole person and work, as the Life of redeemed humanity, it is most undeniably true that if a man receive him, he shall live for ever. "In Him was life," and hence "he that hath the Son hath life."

But if the words of our Lord do either primarily or subordinately relate to the Sacrament of the Supper, they must have a strictly figurative interpretation. No other is consistent with the intention of the discourse, or with the exposition which the Divine speaker himself gives of it. From corporeal bread, with which by miracle he had fed the people, he passes to spiritual bread, as that which is necessary to nourish their souls to everlasting life. This bread, he tells them, is himself. "I am that bread of life—the living bread which came down from heaven," immediately adding, with a special reference to his sacrificial death, as that which makes the bread he was in himself available to the life of mankind, "and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." To eat this bread, or, as the idea of his death was now introduced, to eat his flesh and drink his blood, he goes on to say, is the means, and the only means of obtaining eternal life, as only thus can man be brought into vital communion with him as the life-giving bread. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ; and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink, indeed." (v. 53—55.)

Profoundly beautiful and instructive is this discourse if figuratively understood, but most inadequate and poor if perverted to any other interpretation. Christ is the Life as well as the Light of the world. To receive the Life Christ himself must be received. His flesh must be eaten, and his blood must be drunk. But how—in what sense? Plainly in the only way in which this is possible, and in the only sense in which it could be of service; that is, figuratively and spiritually. Flesh and blood are figurative of spiritual blessings, eating and drinking are figurative of spiritual acts; the former of that in Christ which gives life, the latter of that in man which appropriates the life. This is not conjecture, but the very instruction of Jesus himself. In the 35th verse he explains eating and drinking to be synonymous with *coming to him, and believing on him*. “I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.” The instruction is afterwards repeated: “It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, *cometh unto me*. Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that *believeth on me* hath everlasting life” (v. 45—47). The Eucharist then, if referred to at all, is referred to only in its figurative import, as the veil and symbol of spiritual ideas. The reference implies for it no capability of giving or supporting life. This comes directly from the Saviour, and is obtained personally by immediate access to him. The living bread is received by coming to him and believing on him, not by the observance of a rite, however significant and solemn. These are eminently mental and moral conditions, operations of mind involving great religious activity, and therefore supposing not the efficacious virtue of the Sacrament administered, but the vitalizing power of the truth and Spirit believingly realized and enjoyed.

More strikingly still does this appear from a subsequent declaration of our Lord. The Jews had misapprehended his meaning, imposing on his words their own gross and carnal conceptions. Many even of his disciples were perplexed with his language, and murmured at his doctrine as "a hard saying." To correct their misapprehensions, and also to provide against all possible perversions of what he had said, he proceeded to explain the true import of "his life-streaming words:" *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life*" (v. 63). Here is the key to his whole design. This verse gives us a canon for the interpretation of his entire discourse, and was obviously intended to supply such a canon. It demands for his statements a much deeper meaning than his words literally convey. His language is to be figuratively construed. It is the bold and free costume of Oriental symbolism, strikingly indicative and suggestive, though half concealing, as if by its very disguise to provoke us the more carefully to study, the profound and subtle thoughts it is designed to express. It is the spirit that quickeneth not the flesh; that is, not distinctively the Holy Spirit, but more generally the life-giving influence which pertains to the Son of God, and which flows and streams through him to us, in his redeeming character and work. Do not suppose, our Lord seems to say, that I speak of a sensible eating of my flesh and blood: that would profit nothing, even were it possible. I mean rather that which flesh and blood figuratively denote. The words that I speak unto you *are spirit and life*, have, that is, a spiritual and not a literal signification. They are not things but only signs of things, the envelope and symbolic drapery of that which lies beneath; and only as they are so interpreted can their true doctrine be

apprehended, their vivifying principle be felt. The result is the same if by "*words*" we understand not language but instruction, the substance of what is taught, as in verse 68, Peter says, "Thou hast the *words* of eternal life," by which must be intended not the syllables he pronounced but the truths he proclaimed.* According to this view words are used for what they stand for, and Christ, applying to mere terms what is true only of that which they are meant to represent, declares in effect; "*What* I say unto you, the instruction I now give, is spirit and life."

Let it then be conceded that the words of Jesus had a future bearing, and looked with especial reference to the Supper not then but afterwards to be instituted. The admission will be found to favour the Tractarian hypothesis quite as little as it does the Roman Catholic dogma. If the language does not teach that bread and wine are flesh and blood, and that eating and drinking are an actual participation of the Divine and human natures, neither does it teach that there is in the Sacrament a real though transcendental presence of the Saviour's person, by virtue of which it possesses the value of a "commemorative sacrifice;" or becomes efficient as a positive conveyance of spiritual gifts. All that it imports is, that in this service, as indeed in every service, but in this pre-eminently and by special appointment, Christ is to be viewed and received as *living bread, the bread of God from heaven*,—as the principle, that is, of Divine life and nourishment graciously vouchsafed to perishing human nature,—and received in the only way in which reception of him in this character is conceivable,—by acts and conditions of the conscious mind which are to the inner man what hunger and thirst, eating

* In this sense *ῥῆμα* is frequently used. See John iii. 34. v. 47. viii.

¶7. Acts x. 37. Rom. x. 8. 17. Ephes. vi. 17. 1 Pet. i. 25.

and drinking are to the outer man. The truth however is that, except for immediate practical effect, and by the most free and uncritical accommodation of its terms, the discourse of the Redeemer cannot be applied to the Eucharist at all.

The conclusions thus obtained are in harmony with the whole teaching of the New Testament. It is, indeed, no slight corroboration of the view we have taken of the words of Christ in the sixth chapter of John, that it blends in perfect accord with the general strain of Scripture revelation. No statement can be adduced either of the Saviour or of his Apostles which, when fully considered, can be construed as evidence that the Sacraments are of themselves influential to salvation, or in any way effectual to the production of spiritual results on the ground of some mysterious efficacy residing in their own nature. Whatever grace comes by them is derived consistently with the mode in which grace is commonly obtained. No exception to the established method of Divine communication is made in their favour. They have no appointment of special peculiarity to give or support the life of God in the soul, much less an appointment which exalts them above the written word, and renders their administration of greater importance than the preaching of the Gospel. They are rather parts of a whole to which one general character applies,—a visible setting forth of the mystery of infinite love, before hid in God but now revealed in Christ, expounding its meaning to the sense and repeating its impression on the heart; and are therefore profitable for renewal or nourishment only as the understanding is affected by the truth they teach, and the will is urgent for the grace they signify. They are thus in agreement with the whole system to which they belong. They contemplate man as every other instrumentality con-

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templates him, and address him as every other means addresses him.

The human concurs with the Divine. Grace—the grace which bringeth salvation—has fixed conditions, and these are such as to make its reception a *personal* act. If mysteriously given it is intelligently sought and obtained. Certain states and operations of the individual mind are uniformly required for its gift, and these appear as the grounds of its enjoyment in all the several degrees of Christian proficiency. Religion, like God, is light as well as love; and both exist in every stage of its progress in mutual action and well-adjusted proportion. “There is a clear and open passage,” says South, “between the understanding and the will. Light in the one naturally begets heat in the other, and the conviction of the affections is never greater than the illumination of the judgment. So that when the work of the Spirit miscarries about the understanding, it never thoroughly succeeds in the will; for it strikes the will and the affections through the understanding”*. In prescribing the terms of salvation God has humbled man, but not degraded him; proclaimed his depravity, but still enlisted his service; and while reserving to His own grace the exclusive honour of efficiency, has intrusted to us the duty, rather indeed the privilege, of co-operating to its effect. With Him is the fountain of life; but the vital current is not poured into man as into a vessel, or diffused through his powers like some invisible essence. It is given to him only when he *thirsts*, and he receives it only as he *drinks* it. If the first communication is made unsought, it avails but little except the desire springs to meet, and the will re-acts to embrace and retain it.† “My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed,” says

* Sermon, Gen. vi. 3. † Coleridge's Aids to Reflection, Vol. ii, 269.

the Redeemer ; but *hunger* and *thirst* are necessary to actual participation and a full supply. Regeneration has "the word of truth" for its appropriate instrumentality, and love for the means of its increase "knowledge and all judgment : " both therefore require the conscious putting forth of man's intelligent capability. The command of the Apostle is "Grow in grace," which itself supposes continual exertion in the work of spiritual culture ; but to this it is added, either as an explanation or a supplement, "and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ," which further implies a steady habit of reflection on the character and work of the Son of God. And not else can religion be known as a power or enjoyed as a privilege. It may be felt as a superstition or assumed as a form, but it cannot be realized as a predominant affection or practised as a regulative principle. To be profitable, as indeed to be personal, the service of God must be a *reasonable* service ; but it can be this only by the joint engagement in it of the understanding and the heart. Our Lord in fact resolves eternal life into the *knowledge* of Himself and the Father, and Peter prays that grace and peace may be multiplied through the *knowledge* of God, and of Jesus our Lord.*

The conclusion then is, that the Sacraments possess no distinctive peculiarity, no mysterious efficacy, which exalts them to a pre-eminence above all other means of grace. If in some respects they have a character of their own, the singularity is not one of superior rank or inherent virtue. Whatever their value as ordinances of Divine appointment and occasions of Christian fellowship, they have in relation to the higher life of man only an office in common with that of other religious observances ; they are no exception to the rule which unites the exercise of his intellectual to

* John xvii. 3. 2 Pet. 1, 2.

the purification of his moral nature, and which ordains for the grace of God that it shall operate on the heart with the full concurrence of the will. There is indeed an admirable consistency of method, of mutual terms and stipulations, in the communication of spiritual gifts, which embraces as well the Sacraments as all other services. This method is adapted by the Author of our being to the nature he has given us in the state of disorder into which sin has plunged it; and thus adapted could not it may be have been otherwise than it is. As this nature is essentially the same under every visitation of the Spirit, it requires always for the production of similar results a similar kind of moral treatment. It is not now a thing, and again a power; it is unchangeably one, and under every influence the latter. And hence, because it can be savingly affected not by arbitrary impressions unconsciously received, but by an agency operating regularly through the laws of its constitution—according, that is, to the orderly action of its several capabilities in their established relation to each other—it is the arrangement of Divine mercy that the bestowment of *its* “good things” shall depend on the like conditions in the subject, whatever the ordinance prescribed or the instrumentality employed. The blessings provided in the same way are dispensed agreeably to the same rule; and this while it honours the grace of God in giving, engages the activity of man in receiving.

CHAPTER VIII.

BENEFITS OF THE SACRAMENTS.

We are far from depreciating the positive institutions of Christianity. Their very establishment is a declaration of their importance; their nature is a proof of their utility. The preceding discussion is not intended to lower their character or to diminish their interest, but rather in the estimation of a well-instructed piety, to illustrate and heighten both. To clear away from them the incrustations of error is to vindicate and honour them; to define their proper function is to further their just influence and objects. If we exalt them too highly by giving them an office they were not designed to fulfil, we lessen in effect the service they were appointed to render; for the good that may be realized is frequently lost when sought by mistaking methods, or in connexion with impossible ends: but by developing their true intention and assigning their legitimate place, we take the directest means to secure the very benefit they were instituted to bestow.

An exaggerated estimate, even to the extent of investing them with a different character, is, as we have seen, the error both of Tractarian and Roman Catholic theology. But this error does not stand alone. No extreme perhaps ever does. Another lies at the opposite pole, and exists, it may be, only by projection and recoil from the first. By some the Sacraments are greatly undervalued; by others all but despised; and one of them at least, though as

much from fear as from slight, is by many wholly neglected. This is much to be deplored. It dishonours the wisdom that ordained, and overlooks the mercy that attends them. Their importance is not small. If they are not inexplicable mysteries, neither are they bare and useless signs. If they do not contain treasures of heavenly blessings which are poured into the bosom of every recipient, neither are they barren forms of that bodily exercise which profiteth little. Though dependent on mere authority for their existence, they have for their sanction the word of Him who has said, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." Though possessing no inherent virtue or determinate power to regenerate and sanctify, they may in no indifferent sense be classed with the number of those wells of salvation, out of which it was prophesied the thirsty should draw water with joy. As, indeed, they were established mainly for our observance, they must be designed supremely for our advantage; for we cannot suppose that Divine wisdom would prescribe unprofitable solemnities, or incorporate a rite with an eminently gracious economy without intending by it a suitably gracious end.

We have already seen that the Sacraments serve historically as confirmations of our belief in the truth of the Christian records. They belong to the "great cloud of witnesses" which with unimpeachable veracity attest that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. They give evidence of the facts to which they relate as undeniable as that which is given by any national festival or periodic celebration, to the single event it is specially set apart to keep in mind. No modern date can be assigned to their first observance. The search for

their beginning, takes the inquirer backward through a plain and beaten pathway of many centuries, and conducts him, where also it leaves him, to the day of Jesus Christ. Throughout this travel he meets with no interval during which they have dropped out of memory, no period during which they have fallen into disuse. Full assurance and certainty await him at the end. No cloud rests upon their origin; no doubt hangs about their Author. The region of myth is much farther back, and belongs to quite a different class of circumstances. Authentic history pours its full light on their very commencement; illuminates the touching scene in the upper room at Jerusalem, where the Supper is first eaten, and the joyful occasion at the Pentecost, when the baptismal commission is first executed. Their testimony is thus decisive, as certain as though to give it had been the sole object of their institution: and the only alternatives are the acceptance of their testimony, or the belief of a most incredible supposition; this, namely, that though the history of these ordinances can be clearly traced to the period when the events which they are consecrated to commemorate are said to have taken place, and though in the early ages when infidelity looked with a keen and suspicious eye upon the system to which both ordinances and events belonged it never denied or doubted the existence of either, yet no such events ever really transpired, and successive generations of honest and virtuous men, including the wisest and best of the race, have committed themselves to a fiction which time has evolved out of a slight substratum of fact, or accepted a falsehood which selfishness has fabricated to impose on the credulous and the weak. Of these alternatives there can be no hesitation in choosing the first. This is the only possible, because the only reasonable, one. Themselves undeniable, the Sacra-

ments tell of something equally undeniable with themselves. They stand amidst the rush and wreck of ages sublime monuments of the great facts of the Christian revelation, ever proclaiming their certainty as they visibly perpetuate their memory ; thus rebuking by a simple attestation the unbelief which pronounces the Gospel to be a cunningly devised fable, and supporting, by a proof which ever calls sense to its aid, the faith which comes to God believing that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

We have further seen that the Sacraments are an outward and sensible publication of the Gospel. They have a relation to truth as well as to fact. Confirming the great events they also illustrate the primary doctrines of Christianity. They interpret as signs what they verify as monuments. A refutation of infidelity they are also a protest against a degenerate faith, particularly that which robs the sufferings of Christ of their propitiatory power, and the Holy Spirit of his office to regenerate our fallen nature. Viewed in relation to the facts they commemorate, they imply the moral estrangement of man from his Maker in the corruption of his affections and will : but they do this principally by further setting forth the means of his recovery and sanctification ; declaring of Jesus that his death was an atonement for sin, and of the Comforter that his mission was to purify the heart. They are thus a symbolical discourse in continual delivery, a silent but instructive exposition of the most important verities of the Gospel ; in which character they are of eminent advantage in fixing the attention, quickening desire, suggesting thought, deepening impression, and, generally, building up believers on their most holy faith.

The Sacraments are also badges of Christian profession, and marks and pledges of separation from the world. In

this view they operate as monitors to warn and council, as safeguards to preserve and defend. Such however is their design, though unhappily the duties and privileges of one of them, baptism, are seldom urged, and still more rarely felt. They distinguish an individual as the Lord's, "his own" by consecration as by purchase; as avowedly belonging to the people of the Lord, those whom he has chosen out of the world, and of whom, though speaking only of the faithful among them, he has said, "They shall be mine in that day when I make up my jewels." They hence admonish and bind him to live consistently with so high a distinction; to flee youthful lusts, and to follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Separating him from the world they virtually charge him to avoid all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. Devoting him to Christ and pledging him to His service, they remind him at every fresh administration, witnessed or shared in, of his engagement to put on Christ; and at other times, by vivid remembrances of what they imply and impose, they lead him, or tend to lead him, to live not unto himself, but unto Him who died for him, and rose again.

Added to this the Sacraments are occasions of religious association and fellowship. This at least is true, and conspicuously so, of the Supper of the Lord. Here, if anywhere, believers baptized into one body are made to drink into one Spirit. Here hearts are drawn together in mutual affections, fused into oneness by the fervours of Divine love kindled by recollections of the dying Redeemer, and wrought to such forgetfulness of self and tenderness of reciprocal sympathy, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. It was at the institution of this Sup-

per that the new commandment was given to the disciples to love one another, and to love with an ardour like that with which Christ had loved them; that is, with a love that would lay down the life. So John understands the words of his Lord: "Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." At every fresh observance of it the commandment is repeated, acquires additional emphasis, and on hearts rightly prepared falls with redoubled impression. What is a means of Christian fellowship, promoting among the members of the body of Christ the circulation of tender and self-forgetting sympathies, becomes also for that very reason a powerful demonstration of Christian union. At his table the prayer of Jesus, offered at the close of the address which followed His institution of the Supper, for the oneness of His disciples, receives its most complete and gracious answer. There, if anywhere, and there, wherever else, is it seen that believers are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Beautifully is this symbolized in their eating the same bread and drinking the same cup: "For as," says the Apostle, seizing this very illustration, "there is one bread, so we though many, are one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." The loaf, though composed of many grains, and divided into many portions, is nevertheless one; so the followers of Jesus, whatever their numbers and diversities of gifts, are united in one holy fellowship, and their participation of the one bread is emblematical of their having drunk into one Spirit.*

* So we must understand the words, "*Οτι εἰς ἄρτος, ἐν σῶμα οἱ πολλοὶ ἐσμεν*" οἱ γὰρ πάντες ἐκ τοῦ ἐνὸς ἄρτου μετέχομεν. 1 Cor. x. 17. The common version, "For we being many are one bread and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread," is obviously

The preceding observations apply generally to both ordinances, save that the latter portion of them refers more particularly to the Supper of the Lord. We must now consider them apart. No complete view of their advantages can be had from a discussion in which the two remain united throughout. To each belong peculiar benefits, and these can be apprehended most distinctly in a separate consideration.

Baptism, we have already seen, has an office of eminent utility. Even on the ground of service to the subject it is not to be lightly esteemed. However erroneous the view which exalts it to a kind of co-efficiency with the Holy Spirit in the work of regeneration, it must not, in the anxiety to avoid that extreme, and as if to place ourselves at the greatest distance from it, be divested of its strictly evangelical character, and be treated as a mere ceremony to be once observed and then forgotten. This is too much the spirit in which the rite is *practically* regarded. Where credulity does not reverence it as a mystery, indifference frequently looks upon it only as a form. No blessing is seen in connexion with it; none perhaps thought possible; and therefore none expected and looked for. For this reason the ordinance becomes of little advantage either to parent or child; and on this account probably it is, that the children of even religious parents, not consecrated to God in faith, are so generally of the number of those who "are estranged

incorrect. Not to mention that it seems to assign as the reason of our unity the fact that we are many, it misses the point and beauty of the passage altogether, confounding the illustration of the doctrine intended with the doctrine itself. That believers are one body is what the Apostle designs to teach, but not that they are one bread and one body. The oneness of the bread is rather introduced as a type of the oneness of the body, and the joint participation of Christians in the same bread as the proof and visible expression of their unity.

from the womb, and go astray as soon as they are born."* Looking at the accidents of the rite, possibly at the age of those who are usually presented for it, parents are apt, by a subtle infidelity of the reason, never perhaps construed into words, hardly indeed into shape of any kind, to inquire. What can it profit them? At least they act as though they proposed this question, and their conduct has nearly all the effect of an unfavourable answer. They outwardly conform to the command of God, or rather to the custom which the Church has established, in presenting their little ones for baptism, and then secretly congratulate themselves that the task is over. The very earliest period is preferred for the service, not that the child may at the beginning of its days receive the visible signature of God's love in the covenant of eternal redemption, but that with the utmost avoidable inconvenience to themselves a requirement of religious formality may be disposed of: not that, like Hannah, they may thus early "lend the child to the Lord," connect it by outward incorporation with his redeemed family, and lay themselves under the responsibility of a public profession and pledge to bring it up with Christian nurture, but that an irksome duty may the more easily be performed, and once performed all further anxiety respecting it be dismissed.

By such indifference a Divine ordinance is practically dishonoured, and a gracious privilege converted into a ground of condemnation. This indifference has its root in reckless inconsideration, or in an actual undervaluing of the Sacrament itself. In either case it must be attended with positive injury and evil. God cannot intend an idle and empty ceremony, particularly in connexion with the Gospel. His appointments are not the impositions of mere authority, but the tokens and pledges of redeeming grace.

* Psalm lviii. 3.

These appointments must rise in character and value with the importance of the system to which they belong. Adapted to its doctrine they must participate in its design, and suited to its end they must be pervaded by its spirit. In the case of the Christian dispensation, therefore, in which the highest revelations of infinite wisdom and mercy meet in a scheme of salvation for the world, there must, on this principle alone, be assigned to its ordinances an office of great and peculiar interest. This is certainly true of Baptism. Standing at the entrance to the kingdom of God, it has a welcome and a benediction for every one who rightly sues for admission. Placed at the threshold of human life, it blesses the very infancy of man; and while claiming in a solemn act of appropriation the commencement of our days for the Lord, it also pledges to us, with distinct and emphatic assurance, the promise of his love, "I will be a God unto thee."

If to be born again of water, and to be saved by the washing of regeneration, is, as we believe, to be baptized, the import and, therefore, profit of the rite cannot be wholly set forth in the interest which attaches to it as an external sign. Unless these expressions are an intentional exaggeration, and describe in figure more than they mean in fact, it must have a ministry of greater comprehension than the giving of instruction by significant ceremony. A ministry of this kind would be limited to those of mature life, who, capable of reflection and judgment, were disposed to learn what baptism was appointed to teach. But the ordinance is intended specially for the good of those who receive it, and the good must date from the time of their reception of it, according to their capability to be benefitted, reaching onward in some sense through the period of undeveloped consciousness to the time when outward privilege can be

improved to inward advantage. Birth implies the coming into a new state, and if baptism be a birth there must be something into which the subject is born. Though himself not consciously different, he cannot be in all respects the same after as before the rite. A new existence is not given, but a new relation is established. No change is wrought upon his nature, but an important change is effected in his position. He may not, as in infancy he cannot, understand the benefit acquired ; but the knowledge is not essential to the certainty of it, as many things contribute to our good which are not perceptible to the reason, while our childhood is profited by a number of conditions, commonly and properly denominated blessings, of which the existence, certainly the value, becomes known to us only in the fruits of a ripened experience. It is much to be placed in favourable temporal circumstances, apart from objects which degrade and privations which distress ; to be admitted as of right, even before the privilege can be appreciated, to some ennobling and happy condition of human life ; to be surrounded with and to grow up into the kindly influences which enter with subtle and purifying effect into the formation of early habits and tastes, and thereby to acquire, by an almost insensible process, the aptitudes and predispositions which ultimately qualify for the enjoyment by voluntary effort of a high degree of earthly felicity. It is more to be openly admitted into the kingdom of God, with the acknowledgment of a claim to all its external privileges ; to be separated by a solemn act of dedication to the Divine service ; and by this to be accounted " holy unto the Lord ;" to be presented unto Christ with the certainty of receiving his blessing as the fruit of his travail and the purchase of his love ; to be associated with his people with the distinct assurance that " it is not the will of the Father that one of

the little ones should perish ;" and in this association to grow up in a perpetual atmosphere of prayer and sanctifying influence, almost imperceptibly receiving impressions and acquiring virtues which prepare for a full experience, by means of an active personal piety, of the blessedness of "the communion of saints." To this privileged condition it is the province of baptism to introduce us, not efficaciously on its own account, but instrumentally by Divine appointment, as a formal act of initiation ; by which introduction it verifies and illustrates its character as the birth of water and the washing of regeneration.

But further. Baptism is "the circumcision of Christ." It stands to Him, and to those whom he has redeemed, in the same relation as circumcision stood to Abraham and his seed. It is the seal of the covenant, but in its purely evangelical import; the temporal having passed into the spiritual, and the earthly into the heavenly. In this covenant, as revealed to the patriarch, there was a conjunction of both elements, the one forming the groundwork and typical exhibition of the other. Provisions were made which referred mainly to the present life, but only so that when the inferior purpose they were intended to serve was accomplished they should fall away, leaving the most important part uninjured and alone. They were not essential to the perpetuity of the covenant, nor valuable solely on their own account, but chiefly as types and prophecies of something more lasting and more precious. They were the leaves that overlaid but only half concealed the fruit, or rather, the veil which hid and yet suggested the presence and substance of still "better promises." These promises were of good that was, to come, of good that was laid up in the Gospel—"the Faith which should afterwards be revealed ;" and had reference principally to the gift of the Holy Spirit, and to the future

inheritance of the saints. These promises have been fulfilled. Both the inheritance and "the *earnest* of the inheritance" are given in Christ; and the right to them, though existing by virtue of the "better covenant" which contains them, through the relation of Him its Head to our race, is formally sealed to us in baptism.

The Spirit is first and chief among the blessings of the covenant. The pre-eminence is such that the Gospel takes from him its characteristic description, as "the ministration of the Spirit." It derives from him the glory that excelleth, the lustre of grace and majesty that throws into shade the glory of all other ministrations. Whether the injury sustained by the fall was mainly the loss of his presence or not, the benefit conferred by redemption was chiefly the bestowment of his life-giving power. By this donation it was that the "last Adam was made a quickening spirit." The gift of the Spirit contains in germ all moral perfection, and is itself the promise and possible realization of all other gifts, however good and perfect. Supreme in value, it is vast in comprehension and extent. The greatest blessing of the covenant, it belongs to all whom the covenant embraces; and hence, as the claim to it is sealed, outwardly and ostensibly, in the very Sacrament which seals to an individual the whole provisions of the covenant, there must be a sense, not wholly unprofitable for future interests, in which the promise of it becomes by baptism "unto children."

This benefit of the rite, however, whatever it may be, is certainly not such, that any difference is produced by it in the evangelical position of the child baptized, as compared with that of the child who is not baptized. The same position is common to both, founded on their equal relation to that redeeming economy by which the grace of God has

abounded commensurately with the offence of man, and the free gift has come upon all men to justification of life. Alike included in the "common salvation," they are alike admitted to the kingdom of heaven, if before temptation surprises them into sin death takes them away from suffering. Nor is the benefit that of spiritual influences, secretly operating to the removal of original corruption, in the case of those who die before they have known to do either good or evil.* This in effect would be little else than baptismal regeneration, though limited to a particular class of instances: and for this, we have seen, there is no rational vindication and no scriptural authority. But apart from this, no extraordinary efficacy is required, either of the rite, or of the Holy Spirit in the rite, for the special emergency supposed; and certainly none is promised. The demand for it is based on that view of human depravity which expresses itself in metaphor, speaking of it as blemishes to be removed, and defilement to be washed away. A doctrine may be illustrated by a figure, but it must not, as it cannot safely, be built upon it. Whatever original sin may be, it cannot, as a ground of personal condemnation, pertain to the unconscious infant. If it be viewed as defilement, it is defilement virtually purged away by that blood which cleanseth from all sin. Nothing is more true than that one man cannot be held responsible for another man's sins; and though the sinfulness of human nature is the inevitable consequence of Adam's transgression, yet the penalty righteously connected with this consequence has been mercifully remitted in Christ. Strictly speaking, evil can have no personal existence

* "It," baptism, "secures too, the gift of the Holy Spirit in those secret spiritual influences, by which the actual regeneration of those children who die in infancy is effected."—*R. Watson. Institutes, Vol. iii. p. 515.*

apart from an act of the will; and though it may in some mysterious sense be transmitted as an hereditary possession of the race (for the nature that sinned must be a sinful nature), and though it may exist in the soul as a kind of latent power which after years would be sure to develope, yet to the child as such, and hence to the child dying in infancy, the condemnation and punishment of it are taken away. Baptism, therefore, is not needed for that which the grace of God, and the gift by grace, has already effected.

Nevertheless, the promise of the Spirit being the great promise of the new covenant, and baptism being the seal of the covenant, the administration of the rite cannot be without a special spiritual interest to the person baptized. At least it proclaims his right to the promise, and gives it a particular application to him as one included in its design: it also places him, by external incorporation with the body of Christ, in such a relation to the Spirit as naturally favours the fulfilment of the promise in future bestowments of grace. Nor can we suppose the Spirit himself to be indifferent to this act, especially when performed in a temper becoming its character; the less so as he must be thought to have a peculiar respect to the ordinance which confesses and honours his office. The Church is spoken of as a temple inhabited by the Spirit of God.* To this sacred edifice additions are ever being made, though always on the same foundations; and to children the privi-

* 1 Cor. iii. 16. 2 Cor. vi. 16. "Ye are the temple of God," &c. This is not to be understood particularly of individuals, but generally of a community. "The idea is derived from the mode of speaking among the Jews, where they are said often in the Old Testament to be the temple and habitation of God. And the allusion is probably to the fact that God dwelt by a visible symbol—the *Shechinah*—in the temple, and that his abode was there."—*Barnes' Notes*.

lege of being added, though by outward connexion, to the building is, that they are placed in a favourable position, a position Divinely marked out, for receiving, according to the measure of their developing capability, the blessedness of those who are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit. The benefit is thus prospective rather than immediate, or immediate in provision that it may afterwards become actual in experience. A certain condition is established, that a certain character may be realized. The Spirit is given not as an inward energy, but as an outward presence. Invited by the ordinance itself, and won by the piety that observes it, he may be thought to view with tender regard the child of holy love "planted in the house of the Lord;" to attend its infant mind in the future growth and expansion of its powers, operating upon it as dew and sunshine and genial atmospheres operate on the early flowers of spring. We can suppose him—as in many cases where spiritual impressions reach backward to the very dawn of memory we must suppose him—visiting its unfolding energies with gently stimulating influences; touching with gracious effect every religious faculty as it comes out into daily increasing strength, as the morning sun touches with a quickening ray the swelling and bursting bud; bringing into clearer consciousness and developing to a progressive faith the deep upspringing sentiments of the heart, in its first and mysterious feelings after God; giving form and a tongue to the newly awakened but vague and inarticulate longings after a higher good, and by degrees raising them to a complete and habitual ascendancy over the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and thus, by the soft and secret insinuations of grace, carrying along with them the full concurrence of the individual will, leading forth the whole nature to the love and pursuit

of that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord.

If it be said that this spiritual result is seldom witnessed, the baptized children of even Christian parents only in rare instances growing up into Christ, the answer is, the failure does not disprove the design. The future advantage of the rite is not a necessary but a contingent event. Any means may fail for the want of a right appreciation of their character, and a faithful adherence to their object. The Spirit cannot be unconcerned with the manner in which the ordinance is observed—the faith or unbelief, the prayerfulness or levity, the sense of obligation or otherwise, which accompanies the discharge of the duty; much less can he be indifferent to the after endeavours, or the want of them, to realize for the child all that its Sacramental dedication to God suggests and implies. Lamentably deficient are many even godly parents here. They offer their little ones for baptism with the slenderest knowledge of the meaning of the rite, and formally convey to them a privilege of the highest import and value, of which, in much that is precious in it, they afterwards, through ignorance and neglect, practically deny them. Who can say how much of deprivation and loss to the child is mainly attributable to this cause? Does not God bless the children through the parents? Is not the family economy such that the child, by a sort of relative existence, is included in the life of the parent? Does not the natural succession of parents and children form a Divinely instituted line for the transmission of heavenly as well as earthly good?

It cannot be denied: And this suggests the further remark, that baptism becomes profitable to the child in being first a benefit to the parents. It has a twofold relation, and, when rightly observed, bestows a double blessing.

It engages parents in the solemn act of consecrating their offspring to the Lord, and of identifying them with his people; and is thus adapted to awaken their minds to a serious and fruitful contemplation of the obligations and interests which the ordinance involves. They cannot really give them to the Lord without also giving themselves, nor designedly incorporate them with his body without acknowledging the duty of personal association with the followers of Christ. So that considered in this light alone, the service can be unprofitable only by the indifference or unbelief which is itself an actual ground of guilt. It also brings them into covenant with God for their children, and binds upon them the responsibilities of an engagement, the interests of which are for both worlds. But this covenant solemnity reminds them of the necessity of covenant blessings for themselves, especially by admonishing them that the pledge they give for their little ones can be redeemed only by the possession of the requisite qualifications. Hence baptism becomes of still further advantage to the parents, and then, reflectively, to their families. It demands of them inquiry, that the covenant may be understood; appropriate instruction, that its design may be explained; judicious authority, that its conditions may be enforced; and prayer, faith, habits of worship, and holy living, that its blessings may be secured and enjoyed. It places them, in fact, as we have elsewhere observed, in the very position of Hannah, when, while Samuel was yet young, she "brought him to the house of the Lord in Shiloh," and said, "I have lent him to the Lord; as long as he liveth he shall be lent to the Lord:" and by this position, so exciting in its interest, so great in its privilege, so impressive in its obligations, it devolves upon them the necessity of acquiring those virtues and habits which are indispensable to their

competency for giving effect to their own act. Thus baptism gives, or is fitted to give, a twofold blessedness. It bestows a good which repeats and perpetuates itself in still other good. While conferring certain advantages directly on the subject, it imparts others indirectly through the parental relation. It so blesses the parent that the blessing he receives becomes, by a sort of natural productiveness and self-multiplication, an equal or greater blessing to the child. It thereby, as in other ways, verifies the ancient promise, "I will be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee."

Great is the mercy which provided the Supper of the Lord. Great is the love which presides over its administration, and great the blessedness which results from its worthy reception. Strange that any one loving Christ should be found to neglect it, and still stranger that any one called by His name should be willing to disown it. No ordinance is so solemn and suggestive; none so fruitful of purifying meditation and so helpful to believing prayer; none so humbling to the proud, so healing to the broken, so refreshing to the exhausted, spirit; none in which the invitation so sensibly given is also so profitably complied with: "O taste and see that the Lord is good."

"We have two lives, a natural and a spiritual;" says Jeremy Taylor, "and both must have bread for their support and maintenance, in proportion to their needs and to their capacities: and as it would be an intolerable charity to give nothing but spiritual nutriment to a hungry body; so it would be as useless and impertinent to feed the soul with wheat or flesh, unless that were the conveyance of a spiritual delicacy."* Every kind of life must be fed with that

* Worthy Communicant. Vol. xv. p. 409.—*Heber's Edition.*

which naturally agrees with it ; animal with material substances ; intellectual with intelligible propositions ; and spiritual with heavenly gifts. The first has sense for its instrument, the second reason, the third faith. Each rises above the other in importance and interest, though the whole are proper to the same being ; and the perfection of all would be the perfection of the entire creature. Spiritual life is the noblest and best, and its nutriment is the most delicate and refined. Begotten by the Spirit, by Him it is fed ; derived from Christ, through Him it is preserved ; and its food is the "wine and milk" and manna from above which, if found elsewhere, is amply and richly supplied at the table of the Lord.

Considered simply as provision for those who hunger and thirst, the Christian Supper is a spiritual banquet, a feast on the sacrifice of the Son of God, in which all who communicate with reverence and a well instructed faith become partakers of the altar. Though without the intrinsic virtue attributed to it by a mistaken view of its nature, and having no ministry to affect the heart in the production or maintenance of the inner life independently of the disposition of the recipient, it yet occupies a rank and possesses an office of singular importance and value, as a Divinely instituted means of grace. It is not only an ordinance in which thought is assisted, but one in which emotion is kindled ; not only a service in which the highest instruction is conveyed under forms of great simplicity and beauty, but one in which the soul is deeply impressed, and drawn and knit to Christ in a living fellowship, by the view which faith, as a kind of spiritual sense, obtains of him in that redeeming act which gives life to the world. In this Sacrament, as no where else, because here by most affecting memorials, is he seen lifted up from the earth, offering himself without

spot unto God, moving to penitence by his sufferings, winning to love by his grace. With a prominence which excludes every other view of his character he appears, as in the apocalyptic vision, "a Lamb as it had been slain." The single fact of his death, in its fearful agony but momentous import, stands out in solemn and impressive exhibition. The only object presented (for the feast is sacred to that), it is the only one beheld. Seen alone, it is felt in all its mysterious power. To its commanding attraction the thought yields, to its reconciling virtue the will surrenders, with full and ready submission. Faith, already a bond of connexion between it and the soul, assisted by the sense and quickened by the Spirit, establishes a still closer union. The believer, crucified with Christ, becomes yet more vividly and really a "partaker of His sufferings." Stirred into a livelier sympathy, his heart is drawn into a deeper fellowship with Him. In this fellowship every spiritual want is met. Both medicine and food are given. Sickness finds a cure, and impotence obtains help; desire eats that which is good, and the soul delights itself in fatness. Thus is the flesh of the Son of Man proved to be meat indeed, and his blood to be drink indeed.

Participation with Christ therefore, as "our Passover sacrificed for us," is the comprehensive benefit designed in this Sacrament. Its observance is a Divine entertainment at which He graciously meets His disciples, and to each verifies the promise: "I will sup with him, and he with me." The only sense in which He can sup with us is that of approving our fidelity, and, so to speak, delighting in our love; but we sup with Him in the actual receiving of spiritual gifts,—pardon, peace, purity, assurance, strength to labour, or the will to suffer. These we obtain in communion with

Him at His table; and the reception of these, with all other spiritual good, is the reception of Himself as living bread. It is the realization in its true meaning of that mutual indwelling, and identification with Christ, expressed in His own remarkable words: "He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him." It is this spiritual participation that is set forth in the outward characteristics of the Supper. Only as signs of this have they any intelligible significance; but, considered in this light, they have a most striking and beautiful propriety. Bread and wine, representing the more important elements of physical sustenance, are, as we have before had occasion to remark, symbolical of blessings provided in the Saviour's death; eating and drinking of those affections and acts by which the provision is inwardly received; and hunger and thirst of those eager desires by which the profit and pleasure of it are consciously enjoyed.

Religious ordinances have only a limited instrumentality. It were a mistake to suppose that they have, even by Divine appointment, anything in themselves, which they hold, as if for conveyance and gift, when a certain connexion with them has been formed. They undoubtedly furnish the means or occasion of special communications from above; but generally by first preparing the mind to receive them. Their value, therefore, must be estimated, at least in part, by their effect, or their tendency to such effect, on the character; this effect being the production or increase of what are sometimes called virtues, and sometimes graces—the former, perhaps, when the human element is thought of, the latter when the Divine is considered. They are *means*, but not receptacles and conveyances, of grace. They assist the mind in its struggle to escape from the thralldom of sense and the solicitations of the world, and to come

that spirituality of power and perception which is itself nearness to God, into closer intercourse with Him; and by this proximity to drink, where the current is purest and sweetest, of the river of His pleasures. Accordingly, the Lord's Supper may be viewed rather as an outward instrumentality than as a feast, and its profitableness therefore be judged of principally, by its tendency to nurture and bring out into greater strength and loveliness the implanted graces of the Spirit. These graces may be reduced to the brief but comprehensive summary of the Apostle—Faith, Hope, Charity.

FAITH is the firstborn, and the root of every other. In the only definition of it given in Scripture, it is described as the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Of these unseen objects Christ is unspeakably the chief, and of those facts in his history which concern us most deeply, his death is pre-eminently the greatest. Faith has a special relation to this, and derives from it all its after blessedness. It discerns this and confides in it, perceives its meaning and rests on its sufficiency. In proportion to the clearness of its apprehension is the strength of its assurance; and "the assurance of faith," especially "the *full* assurance," is "a joy unspeakable and full of glory." In the Sacrament of the Supper faith receives peculiar aid. Almost every facility for its exercise is there presented with singular efficacy. Its most important object is exhibited with unwonted impressiveness. This stands out alone, in solemn and affecting isolation. No other object confuses the view, no other interest tempts the desire. The thought is drawn to it strongly, the attention is fixed upon it with undivided energy. All is shut out but Calvary, and nothing is seen but the crucified Jesus.

Thus addressed and thus assisted, faith must increase, take a firmer hold, strike a deeper root, develop a larger growth. The very exercise itself would ensure this, as every power grows by use, and every grace improves by habit. But still more certainly and more completely must this result be gained, by the larger view which faith obtains of its object. For though it extends greatly beyond our knowledge and even lives on concealment and mystery, yet, where it does not degenerate into mere credulity, faith is always related by a certain degree of approximation to our knowledge. From which it follows, that the more we know of that which in its whole extent surpasses our comprehension, the farther can faith penetrate into the remaining obscurity and shadow. So that from the fuller setting forth at the table of the Lord of its principal object, faith acquires greater strength and freedom and assurance: the clearer view obtained is followed by a deeper insight; and with this increased intelligence and power of penetration there comes, what in respect to the death of Christ is of infinite moment, that yet higher element of faith, the firmness of trust and repose of confidence. Faith, to borrow the energetic terms of the Apostle, *roots and grounds* itself in Christ. To which it must be added, that the blessing of God, by means of his Spirit, cannot be wanting to second the natural effect of his own ordinance, and to facilitate the growth of that to the exercise of which the ordinance is specially appointed to minister. For of grace in its present use, as in its future recompense, it must be true, that to him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance. "When we conincorporate the sign with the signification," says Bishop Taylor, "we conjoin the word and the spirit: and faith passes on from believing to an imaginary seeing, and from thence to a greater earnestness of believing, and we shall believe more abundantly: this in-

crease of faith not being only a natural and proper production of the exercise of its own acts, but a blessing and an effect of the grace of God in that Sacrament. . . . To eat the flesh and to drink the blood of Christ sacramentally, is an act of faith; and every act of faith, joined with the Sacrament, does grow by the nature of grace, and the measures of a blessing; and, therefore, is eating of Christ spiritually; and this reflection of acts, like circles of a glorious and eternal fire, passes on in the univocal production of its own parts, till it pass from grace to glory.*

HOPE from its nature looks exclusively to the future: "for what a man seeth, why doth he yet hope for?" Faith has a wider range, taking in with the future both the present and the past. In one view of it, faith seems to rise above and go beyond hope; for it is the *substance* of things hoped for—realises and brings into a present experience the very blessedness which hope rather anticipates than enjoys. But in another and perhaps lower sense, it is the foundation and preliminary condition of it; for hope grows out of faith, and looks forward to the realization of that which faith with keen and subtle vision sees before it, though it may be very far off.—The coming of Christ, with all its attendant honours and felicities, not transient but everlasting, is the chief and all engrossing object of hope. In his first advent the Messiah was "the Hope of Israel;" in his second he is the Hope of the Church. The same Apostle who in Acts xxviii. 20, speaks of him as the former, in 1 Tim. i. 1, speaks of him as the latter, calling him "our hope;" and further describes the glory prepared by him for his people, and to be given at his appearing, as "the hope which is laid up for them in heaven."†—Very important as encouragement, and very influential as stimulus, is this religious affection. Hope

* Worthy Communicant.—*Heber's Edition*: 432, 433. † Col. i. 5.

sustains in trial and strengthens in labour; sheds a balmy influence on the sick and fevered spirit, and animates with fresh courage the heart that disappointment would sadden, or fatigue overcome. It also prepares for the very happiness it anticipates; not only borrows sunshine and joy from the glories it looks forward to, thus fortifying the mind for the endurance of sorrow and toil, but derives from them excitement and motive to a fuller qualification for their future inheritance. By one Apostle "the hope set before us" is described "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast," holding it fast though not always quiet, amid turbulent waves and driving tempests: by another it is said, "every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as He (Christ) is pure."*

Now the Eucharist looks directly forward to the revelation of Jesus Christ from heaven, and to the feast that shall celebrate the finishing of his work—the everlasting banquet of spiritual delights that shall follow to his saints, on their "gathering together unto him." It is a monumental pledge of his coming, the memorial of a past, the promise of a future, advent. "Until he come" is the time appointed for its continuance; but the words seem not only to fix the period for its observance, but to suggest a connexion between the ordinance itself and the event in which it shall terminate,—as though the event was the consummation of the ordinance. It was while he sat at table with them, after the institution of the Supper, that Jesus said to his disciples, "I go to prepare a place for you: and if I go, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there you may be also." Nay, he not only carried their minds forward to his heavenly kingdom, but spoke of its joys as a repetition of the pleasures of his

* Heb. vi. 19.—1 John iii. 3.

table: "I will not," said he, "drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."*

Here, then, is encouragement to hope, and here is food for it. From the thought of a crucified, the mind passes to that of a risen and glorified, Saviour; from the remembrance of one who was "once offered to bear the sins of many," to the anticipation of one "who shall appear the second time without sin unto salvation." Conflict and victory, humiliation and glory, the Man of Sorrows and the Lord from heaven, blend by almost inseparable association in the same scene. The past is joined to the future, and the future is but the finishing and glorification of the past. The same voice is heard in different utterances. In the same solemnity tender command is followed by loving assurance. The lips that pronounce "Do this in remembrance of me," graciously promise "I will come again to you;" and hope, seizing this promise, with serene and steadfast joy declares, "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus." A coming Saviour is a coming recompense, and privilege now possessed is the pledge of felicity yet to be given. Spiritual gifts in the Sacrament are as grapes from Eshcol, the promise and imperfect specimen of the "better and enduring substance in heaven." Grace received there looks onward to glory yet to be revealed, and a present foretaste becomes the surety of a future fullness. This is not an inference merely, but a feeling. Not only from the words of our Lord do we learn it, but the privilege itself suggests it. The "good things" enjoyed are prophetic of "some better thing" in this sense, that they are not their own end. The blessedness is felt to be preliminary, and, therefore,

* Matt. xxvi. 29.

incomplete at the best; the part of a whole, of which the half cannot be told; the scanty instalments of a provision so rich that flesh and blood cannot inherit it, and so ample that eternity will be required to exhaust it. Despondency gives way in the presence of so much promise, as unbelief expires in the presence of so much truth. Fatigue is relieved, and faintness refreshed. Discouragements previously felt are readily forgotten, and fears before indulged are sweetly charmed away. He who said, "A little while, and ye shall not see me;" now says, "A little while, and ye shall see me." The prospect grows upon the view, as the words fall softly on the ear. Expectation rises to confidence, desire kindles to ardour; and hope, the combination of both, with plumed wing and renovated strength, lifted and poised on the height of a present felicity, springs forward into a boundless and glorious future, and sings as it soars, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."*

"But the greatest of these is CHARITY;" not that it lives the longest, but because it is the noblest. Faith and hope are essential to our nature, and will always be incident to our condition. The former will continue as long as there are mysteries unfathomed, and the latter as long as there is a happiness unattained. All the three graces *abide*, says the Apostle, which suggests their permanency; though the continuance will be with specific differences answering to

* 1 Pet. i. 3, 4, 5.

the changes in man's future experience. Love is the greatest in itself, being that which makes us, in the degree in which we possess it, partakers of the Divine nature. It is the greatest relatively to others, being the last and crowning grace, shedding a softening hue and transfiguring radiance over all the rest, and serving to keep and bind them in unison, "as the knot completes and holds together the garland." St. Paul denominates it "the bond of perfectness." It is especially greatest in this, that it is to the soul the dread reality and yet superlative blessedness of an indwelling God; for "God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him."*

Now love is neither self generated nor self supported. The noblest attribute of our nature, it is also the fairest and sweetest fruit of the Spirit. There is a love which is born with us, and which grows up with us; but this is not the love which is of God. There is also an enmity; and this in germ is our depravity, and in development our guilt. Of this enmity the Divine Creator is the principal object, though not the only one; for the absence of love to him is the want of a true affection for the race. The enmity may be secret as well avowed, and often exists as a habit where it is not felt as a passion. It may be the forgetfulness of indifference or the virulence of impiety; the enmity of him who "sets his mouth against the heavens," or of him of whom the Psalmist says, "God is not in all his thoughts." How shall this enmity be overcome? That was the grand problem of Divine government, and its solution is the merit and glory of the Gospel. It could not be by power, for that is impotent in morals; not by law, for "the law worketh wrath;" not by chastisement, for that emboldens; not by holiness or anger in any conceivable

* 1 John iv. 16.

exhibition, for the former can win only where its beauty is perceived, and the latter prevail only where its justice is felt. When David with magnanimous generosity spared the life of Saul, though Saul was in pursuit of David to destroy him, the infuriated king was smitten with remorse and sorrow. "Saul lifted up his voice and wept: and he said to David, thou art more righteous than I; for thou hast rewarded me good, whereas I have rewarded thee evil." When Jesus, with an eye of gentle and sorrowful reproach, turned and looked upon Peter, the look broke the unfaithful disciple's heart, and Peter went out, and wept bitterly. When Saul of Tarsus heard the Saviour whom he was persecuting tenderly inquire, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" his proud spirit trembled before the majesty of the condescension, and his impious zeal softened down to the meek inquiry, "Lord, what would'st thou have me to do?" Yes, tenderness and not terribleness, benignity and not severity, love and not law, that is the only power competent to redeem and attract man's alienated heart, to undermine and destroy the enmity of his carnal mind. Love begets love, and love also quickens and deepens love. We love God, says the Apostle, because he first loved us; and this affection once generated becomes stronger with every new view of that which produces it. The very love that is felt qualifies, by its similitude and sympathy, for a fuller acquaintance with Him who is love itself, and hence requires only an opportunity of closer contact with His love, especially as manifested in Christ, to kindle into greater fervour, and to quicken with a deeper joy.

This opportunity is furnished in the Supper of the Lord. There Divine goodness is presented in its most conspicuous display. Other attributes appear, but only as tributary glories. The service is a special commemoration of infinite

the changes in man's future experience. L^ores our view est in itself, being that which makes us before us the which we possess it, partakers of the ^{of} our thought from the greatest relatively to others, ^{of} wondrous condescen- grace, shedding a softening ^{of}fulness of sin to the self over all the rest, and ser ^{of} from the depth of spiritual unison, "as the knot everlasting felicity. To the garland." St. Paul ^{of} God so loved the world, that he less." It is espec ^{of} that whosoever believeth in him soul the dread rer ^{of} have everlasting life:" to the atten- indwelling God ^{of} He that spared not His own Son, love dwelleth:

Now lov ^{of} up for us all, how shall He not with him The nob ^{of} all things?" It thus presents the Divine and sw ^{of} the light of his infinite benevolence, compassiona- born ^{of} enemies and seeking to win them to himself, the ^{of} for them at an incalculable sacrifice a redemption th ^{of} includes, with an honourable deliverance from all ^{of} personal liability, the bestowment for the present of all spiritual ^{of} good, and the promise for the future of all eternal blessed-

By this means it subdues and overcomes, impresses the conscience and captivates the heart. It humbles pride by the depravity it suggests, awakens sorrow by the suffer- ings it commemorates, excites to gratitude by the mercy it calls to mind. The spectacle of a crucified Saviour it brings and holds before the view,—of Godman dying in ignomi- nious agony, that he might redeem and glorify the nature he assumed,—touches and kindles all the most tender affec- tions of the soul. Yet not alone and apart do they act; for every single emotion is but a separate contribution to the one swelling tide of love, which rises higher and higher, and flows faster and stronger, as the love of Christ which passeth knowledge comes into clearer display, and operates with a mightier power. Excited to love the soul is filled

ise. Feeling the truth, "Ye are not your own, bought with a price," it yields to the demand, and in your body and in your spirit, which are in this temper mingles, though unconsciously, them which the Apostle, as if by some sublime and his inspired imagination catching up harmonies to other ears were inaudible, heard resounding through the universe—commenced in heaven and taken up by every creature on the earth—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." Thus the Sacrament of commemoration passes into a "service of song." The cup which as given by the Saviour is "the New Testament in his blood," as taken by those who rightly receive it becomes "the cup of blessing." The whole ordinance, like the Paschal feast on which it was founded, assumes the character of a special thanksgiving. It becomes what piety has delighted to call it, *the Eucharist*—a service in which, with mingled solemnity and joy, believers "offer to God the sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of their lips, giving thanks to his name."

The holy Supper is thus to the worthy recipient a heavenly banquet, a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined. There he obtains food and drink, and even abundant spiritual delicacies. Many blessings are given in it, because Christ, the source and sum of all blessings, is himself given. Feeding on him, the weak become strong, and the poor are satisfied with bread. Ardently, therefore, is this entertainment to be desired, and ardently it is desired by every one who rightly understands its character, and who, from a sense of want, would let his soul delight itself in fatness. Perhaps, where mistaken fears do not lie in the way, the piety may generally be esti-

mated by the eagerness to draw near unto Christ at his table ; first, because it is the very instinct of piety to offer most ready submission to his will, and especially to obey the command, so tender in its spirit and so gracious in its design, "Do this in remembrance of me;" but, secondly, because nearness to Christ, and that communion with him in his death which gives oneness with him in his life, is the very essence and sustaining element of piety; and this is enjoyed with peculiar and eminent advantages at the celebration of his Supper.

Without depreciating the public ministry, and, particularly, without giving any countenance to that error which exalts the Sacraments above the written word, it may be affirmed that in too many instances the sermon has been preferred to the neglect of the Eucharist, and the deep debasement of the contrite heart, with the holy calm of meditative thought on the crucified Saviour, so proper to the table of the Lord, and so refreshing to the wounded or wearied soul, has been sacrificed to that mere love of intellectual display, which demands for its gratification the subtlety of argument or the polish of rhetoric, or to that worse, because feebler condition of mind, which finds a substitute for its own reflections in the temporary excitement of quaint and pithy, or light and frothy, discourse. Some, no doubt, have been kept from the ordinance through pious but mistaken fears, interpreting to their discouragement the words of the Apostle, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself;" giving to "damnation" its extremest instead of that more limited application which confines it to the sense of a condemnatory judgment; also not knowing, or not considering, that neglects of duty are grounds of condemnation as well as *unholy* performances of it, and that guilt as truly attaches

to the ill discharge of every other Christian obligation, as to the unworthy receiving of the Lord's Supper. It may be that among Methodists, without however any necessity for such consequence, the ordinance has suffered by the importance that has been practically ascribed to the class meeting. The rule of making connexion with this the condition of membership with the Church, has probably, to some extent, and without any such intention, relaxed the severity of that discipline which requires habitual attendance at the Lord's table, led to a languid and unfrequent setting forth of the profit and duty of this the highest form of Christian communion, and hence to an equally languid and unfrequent response to those appeals which have occasionally been made.

If so, the mistake is sufficiently grave to demand immediate correction. While churches should exact, members should pay, more ready and constant attention to this ordinance. Let it not be forgotten that the ordinance is Divine, and that the command to observe it is distinct and imperative. It has therefore a claim superior to all human institutions and means; and though some of these, the suggestions of exalted wisdom and piety, are not for the very profit they yield, as well as for the inferential sanction they derive from the word of God, to be lightly esteemed, yet they must on every ground of comparison sink or lower their claims before the unquestionable obligation to commemorate the Redeemer's sufferings. Let it also be considered that the table of the Lord is not without a certain connexion with his kingdom, and that some kind of relation exists between communion with him at the one and fellowship with him in the other. This connexion was intimated at the institution of the Supper. Giving the wine to his disciples, he carried their thoughts forward to the future, and

cheered them with the anticipation that, though for a time absent from them, he would drink the wine new with them in his Father's kingdom. The two communions are thus associated, the lower preceding the higher; and hence to have a personal interest in his words, that is, in the *form* thus given to the promise of heavenly felicity, it is necessary to enjoy the preparatory privilege of sitting down with him here at the feast he has now provided. Besides, the blessedness promised to believers in the world to come is described as the joy of their Lord, the joy not only as promised to *them*, but as set before *Him* when He endured the cross, despising the shame. A greater reward cannot well be imagined. But to share the joy there should be participation in the sufferings, at least in that sense of sorrowful sympathy and believing commemoration, rendered possible by the memorial Himself established of the sufferings by which the joy was obtained.

Nevertheless, though the Lord's Supper is the common feast of the Church, and ought to be eaten by all, yet by none should it be eaten lightly, and without becoming preparation. Its solemnity demands this, and not else can its benefits be enjoyed. "He that receives Christ, must have a proper, that is, a spiritual instrument, a purified heart, consecrated lips, and a hallowed mouth, a tongue that speaks no evil, and a hand that ministers to no injustice, and to no uncleanness: for a disproportionate instrument is an indecency, and makes the effect impossible both in nature and morality. Can a man bind a thought in chains, or carry imaginations in the palm of his hand? Can the beauty of the peacock's train, or the ostrich plume, be delicious to the palate and the throat? Does the hand intermeddle with the joys of the heart? Or darkness that *hides the naked* make him warm? Does the body live as

does the spirit? Or can the body of Christ be like to common food? Indeed the sun shines upon the good and bad; and the vines give wine to the drunkard as well as to the sober man: pirates have fair winds and a calm sea, at the same time when the just and peaceful merchantman hath them. But although the things of this world are common to good and bad, yet Sacraments and spiritual joys, the food of the soul, and the blessing of Christ, are the peculiar right of saints; and the rites of our religion are to be handled by the measures of religion, and the things of God by the rules of the Spirit; and, therefore, whoever will partake of God's secrets, must first look into his own; he must pare off whatsoever is amiss, and not without holiness approach to the holiest of all holies, nor come to this feast without a nuptial garment, nor take this remedy without a just preparative."*

Self-examination is the first preparative, and the root of every other. This is specially pointed out by the Apostle as the primary qualification. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." A man must know himself, what he is, and what he ought to be. If he does not, he comes to the table of the Lord without any preparation whatever. He has no just estimate of his character, and none of his wants; no proper motive to duty, and no intelligible object of desire. To know himself he must retire within; visit and bring up from their uncovered depths and hiding-places his most secret affections; hold them before the Gospel as before a mirror, to ascertain their external appearances and qualities; pierce and divide them asunder by the two-edged sword of the Spirit, to learn their essential elements and natures; and, lest in the inquiry anything should escape or be only

* Taylor's Worthy Communicant, p. 399.—*Heber's Edition.*

cheered them with the anticipation of his presence when he would be absent from them, he would be in his Father's kingdom. Associated, the lower preparation have a personal interest thus given to the preparation to enjoy the preparation here at the feast of blessedness promised to them on the cross, despite the imagination of a preparation in a secrecy which eludes even the suspicion, by the fact that it has given to lust a name, by having given it an outward form.

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A knowledge of self is frequently a knowledge of sin, always of weakness and of want. It is only the man who knows himself the least that imagines himself the best—who is richest in his own esteem that is poorest in the eyes of God. Self-examination by revealing the true character reveals the true necessities of the soul, its depths of spiritual poverty, and its paralysis of spiritual power: and though the poverty has been assisted and the paralysis relieved, it still discovers defect and need, feeble faith and languid love, selfish aims and worldly policies, evil tendencies of various kinds to be suppressed, and gracious dispositions of every name to be encouraged. Indeed, the rule of the Christian life is one which ever unites a sense of imperfection to the fact of progress; so that the greater the attainment the stronger the feeling of deficiency. Just as an

imperfectly understood, he must pray: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." This self-inquiry is the more necessary because of the facility, and even the desire, frequent though seldom perhaps construed into thought, of self-deception. Man is proud, and would escape the humiliation of self-accusation and reproach; he is vain, and loves to feast himself with the luscious falsehood that he is rich, and increased with goods, and has need of nothing. Sin also is intensely deceitful, a leaven of subtle essence, and not seldom of imperceptible operation. It works below the surface, far away from the casual view, encroaches silently and with steady aggression on sentiment and sympathy, eating its way downward with a secrecy which eludes even the suspicion, and comes into actual consciousness often only when temptation has given to lust a name, by having given it an outward form.

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artist the more accomplished he becomes the less is he satisfied with his work, because the refinement of his taste and the intelligence of his judgment enable him to discern blemishes where before he only saw beauties ; so the believer, the more he grows in grace the more he feels his need, the quicker becomes his sense of infirmity, and the deeper his conviction of failure.

With the knowledge of want is connected the desire of supply. A truly felt necessity is sure to be attended with hunger and thirst, and the latter will never be known until the former is realized. It was a conscious deprivation of spiritual good that constrained the psalmist to cry out, "As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God ; when shall I come and appear before God ?" And it was the actual reception of this desired good which led him to declare, "Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and causest to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts : we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple." As conscious necessity brings hunger and thirst, these, again, induce with the ardour that longs the humility that begs, with the eagerness that craves the energy that strives, with the willingness that labours the submission that trusts. And these are the means to an adequate supply. Not only are they a good and a gain in themselves, but they are the very conditions on which the promises of Divine communication are fulfilled. God does not waste his mercy on those who have no desire for it. He reserves his choicest gifts for such as need them, and who, needing them, are willing to accept them on his own terms. "He resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." "He filleth the hungry with good things, and the rich he sendeth empty away." "To

this man will I look," he says, "even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word."

Now this whole complex of affections, growing out of the single exercise of self-examination, is that which is required, because it best qualifies, for a profitable observance of the holy Supper. Necessary in its degree for the reception of Divine grace in every Christian duty, it is particularly necessary for those measures of it which this ordinance may justly be thought the occasion of imparting. For as all grace comes through the mediatorial sufferings of the Redeemer, and as the Eucharist has a special because commemorative reference to these, it is not unreasonable to think, the conclusion indeed is inevitable, that this is one of the most fruitful of those means by which the believer is to become "strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." In addition to which, poverty and hunger of spirit, with humble trust and prayerful expectation, are those very elements of feeling which the Saviour's sacrifice most properly demands, and is naturally fitted to excite.

Where this state of mind is the preparation for communion, there will be little danger of mistaking the true design and function of the Sacrament. The real benefit to be obtained will not be lost in a superstitious desire or dreamy looking for an impossible advantage. Correctly understood, it will be directly and intelligently sought. The hunger will point to its proper food, and the poverty will look for its true riches. Ignorance of self is the parent of most religious errors, particularly of those which concern the inner life: a knowledge of self, on the other hand, is the introduction to nearly all other knowledge. The man who does not know himself is not likely to understand the of that which is intended to serve and profit him; he who is most familiar with his own character will,

by the judgment he forms of his actual necessities, be able more truly to estimate the value of whatever means are established for his welfare. Knowing their capability he will expect from them the very assistance they are designed to give, and, expecting, will receive. Self-knowledge will not only develope spiritual desire, but inform and control it; not only encourage humble trust, but enlighten and direct it; not only awaken earnest hope, but instruct and guide it. This will be a great result in itself, so much gain to the whole religious character; for the excitement and proper direction of these affections is the very life and strength of religion in the soul: but it will lead to a still greater, in the further exercise and quickened growth of the affections themselves in the actual celebration of the sacred ordinance; and yet to one greater still, the greatest indeed of all, in the reception of those purifying influences which the Spirit, as the glorifier of Jesus Christ, delights to communicate to those who devoutly commemorate his death.

In this the whole design of the Sacrament as a means of grace will be realized. A solid experience of Divine things will be obtained, very different from that imaginary good supposed to flow from some mysterious efficacy in the rite itself. The benefit intelligently acquired will be consciously enjoyed. It will not be a fancied gift of mystic virtue conveyed by material signs, but a permanent acquisition of spiritual treasure granted to personal acts. The primary graces of the Spirit will, as we have seen, come into greater play and power. Already stimulated and directed by the preparatory discipline, they will gain new strength and beauty, not only by the exercise, but by the assistance graciously given; until faith rises to assurance, hope passes into possession, and love swells to ecstasy.

Our design would not be complete without a few practical observations on baptism. They are inserted here, apart from the general discussion of the question, partly, because the plan of the treatise seemed to require such an arrangement, but chiefly, that they may be the last words to occupy the reader's thoughts.

Baptism involves duties as well as rights, engagements as well as privileges ; and these are of solemn and immutable obligation. While by some it is regarded as a charm, or an efficient instrumentality of spiritual good, by others it is treated as a mere ceremony, terminating in itself, conferring no particular benefits, and entailing no weighty responsibilities. This is a grievous mistake, and results either from culpable thoughtlessness, or still more culpable unbelief. Individuals baptized are bound by that circumstance to a Christian profession. Formally consecrated to the Lord, they carry with them the mark which attests his claim ; and thus, as before they were redeemed by him, they now belong to him equally by promise as by purchase. Unless, therefore, they disown the rite, and repudiate the claim of religious service founded upon it, they are engaged by that which has all the force of a pledge to live wholly unto him. They cannot escape the obligation, and can disregard it only by that which denies themselves, while it dishonours and injures God.

Dedicated to the Lord, they have also been separated to his people. The same ordinance which has pledged them to his service has attached them to his Church. It is the mode of entrance, and the sign of incorporation. By virtue of this, so long at least as they acknowledge it, they are bound to the duty of Christian fellowship. If the validity of the act be recognized, the force of the engagement cannot be questioned. They must either renounce their faith

in the rite as administered to them, or else confess themselves obliged to ratify and maintain, in a manner suited to its claims, that connexion with the Church to which the Sacrament has admitted them. But this can be done, worthily and profitably, only by a 'professed membership with some particular section of the Church, and hence by a holy and generous devotedness to all that membership implies.

Individuals baptized are baptized into the name of the Trinity. By this they are committed to the faith of that unsearchable mystery, which proclaims a threefold personality in the undivided essence of the Godhead. Nor is this a mere speculative faith, but an experimental and practical; for it includes that which makes the doctrine of the Trinity specially valuable to us, a devout and grateful recognition of the office and agency of each Divine person in the work of our redemption, with a growing anxiety to experience and honour the grace which comes from the whole, in their combined co-efficiencies and oneness of purpose and power. It therefore demands a large attainment and an eminent sanctity, nothing less, indeed, than the obtaining with becoming adoration and a fruitful piety, the threefold benediction contained in the Apostolic prayer: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost, be with you all."

They are baptized with water, to set forth their moral defilement, and the means of purification. The ordinance confesses the former, and symbolizes the latter; but with such application to the individual subject as imposes upon him the duty of seeking deliverance from one by the instrumentality of the other. We are saved by the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost; and between these there is such a connexion that the reception of the sign involves the responsibility of desire and effort

for the thing signified. So long as the meaning and validity of the rite are admitted, its observance in every case binds the individual to seek, in the sanctification of the Spirit, that which the outward ablution typically represents.

In short, they who are baptized are baptized into covenant engagements, by virtue of which they are solemnly given over to a life of faith and holy obedience. Jehovah has virtually said to them, "I will be a God unto thee;" but he has also said, "Walk before me and be thou perfect." The terms are reciprocal, the promise and the command being so related that the fulfilment of the one depends on the performance of the other. Baptism is the seal of both: it accepts the grace, and pledges the service. A sacred obligation is thus created by it. The person baptized is engaged to be the Lord's, and he must either live to the Lord, or disown his baptism, or deny himself. To acknowledge the rite and yet disregard the duty, is to oppose the practice to the faith, and to be separated from the heathen only to live like an infidel. How many do thus live! What a melancholy element in the reflection on their ungodliness is the circumstance, that the vast populations of our towns and villages are for the most part baptized populations! How it deepens the sadness with which piety regards them to remember, that the worshippers of gold and of gain, the idolaters of family and of self, the votaries of fashion and of pleasure, the victims of intemperance and of lust, were once offered to God in the Sacrament which consecrates to his service! Alas! not a few of these had professing Christians for their parents.

But if the thought embitters our feeling, the fact increases their sin. That which touches piety with a deeper sorrow, crimsones guilt with a darker hue. Infidelity and impiety were grievous enough in themselves; but baptized infidelity

and impiety are much more shocking. To live without God and without hope in the world were itself a fearful wickedness, but to do this with obligations of religious duty formally contracted in baptism is a still greater enormity. To think only of self, and to waste the substance in sacrifice to its corruptions and follies, were a habit of ungodliness of awful criminality, but to think and act thus after receiving the sign of Christian discipleship, and with the vow of dedication to the Lord expressed in the Sacrament yet in force, because neither repealed nor repudiated, is surely a sin of deeper dye and of heavier condemnation. This is the sin of thousands, not only in our country but in our congregations; of thousands, it may be, to whom, by reason of their confirmed indifference and hardness of heart, access by argument or intreaty is now all but impossible; of thousands more who, if they have not arrived at this pitch of moral insensibility, are rapidly progressing towards it, every neglected opportunity of repentance and every resisted solicitation of grace taking them continually nearer; and still of thousands more who have only just crossed the charmed circle of the great enchanter, and stand as yet, though with diminishing power of retreat, at some distance from its centre, whose young affections though seduced are not wholly corrupted, and whose habits, though growing into shape and marked definition for evil, are yet sufficiently unformed to indicate the presence of those higher sentiments which maintain a bold but unequal struggle with the enemy of the carnal mind. To these last particularly, while to all in general, our appeal is addressed.

We invite you,—for our address shall be personal,—to a moment's serious reflection. We ask you to retire from the distractions of business and the enticements of pleasure; to tranquilize the tumult of your thoughts, and to curb the

impatience of your desires. The occasion is one which demands and deserves the most solemn deliberation, for it is one which concerns the course of your life and the cast of your doom. Be alone then with yourselves for a time, and having realized a solitude so new to you, remember that you are not alone, that the all-seeing God is with you. In his presence, the thought of which will make the solitude still more profound, review your history and examine your hearts. Let conscience, in unfettered freedom, accompany the inquiry. Ask yourselves how far you are fulfilling, or even wishing to fulfil, the obligations of religious service implied in your baptism. And since these obligations presuppose others more important than themselves, grounded in the very fact and nature of your being, ask yourselves how far you are fulfilling the great ends of your present existence.

You were designed for high duties, and for glorious rewards. The constitution of your nature sufficiently evinces this. You were born intelligent and accountable creatures; with understandings fitted for the investigation of truth; with powers adapted to the discrimination of virtue; with instincts tending involuntarily to worship; with affections qualifying for spiritual fellowships; with capabilities susceptible of indefinite expansion, accompanied by sentiments of hope and fear, desire and dread, which look forward to an everlasting existence. All these plainly point to God and the felicities of immortality as their ultimate objects of exercise and enjoyment. In these all truth centres, all goodness is contained, all blessedness is consummated. That which is below these is below the level of your nature; that which is against these is against your highest well-being; and that which opposes your well-being transgresses the will of your Creator. Your lightest sin, therefore, is

one of short-coming ; your heavier, the heaviest indeed of all, is that of robbing your souls of what is most dear to them, and by this self-inflicted injury of dishonouring your God. Your folly is seen in your misery, a misery not the less certain because it is little felt. No one can be deemed happy whose higher powers, subordinated to his lower, are for this reason virtually dead. He only lives truly who lives in his nobler part, in that which forms his special distinction, and crowns him with glory and honour. Hence it is that the Scriptures call the purified activity of man's religious affections *life*, their degeneracy and corruption *death*. But your guilt is seen in this, that you violate by wilful disobedience the law of Him in whom you live, and move, and have your being. He has created you for himself, and expressed his design in the very nature he has given you. This design he has only repeated, though with manifold utterance, in the revelation of his Word. But you wholly disregard his will : you cherish no deference to his authority. You do not recognise his claim, or even *think* of the purpose for which he made you. You live as you please, as though you had a right thus to live ; and say in effect to him, "Depart from us ; for we desire not the knowledge of thy ways." You cannot therefore complain if, at the last, the reward of your impiety be the forfeit of everlasting life. It will not surprise you to hear your own language turned against you. It will only be the natural conclusion of your folly, as well as the just appointment of Heaven, to find yourselves driven from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power, by those awful words of denial and repulse : "I never knew you : depart from me."

Born for the service of God and the felicities of immortality, you have been formally dedicated and pledged to

these in baptism. In early infancy the privilege was conferred upon you, and conferred, it may be, not only with the customary prayers of the Church, but with those of believing parents, who offered you to the Lord with swelling hearts, burdened with anxieties and hopes, as they thought of the deathless spirit within you, and revolved the possibilities of your future history. The engagements then virtually made are yet in force. You do not repudiate but acknowledge the act which, while claiming for you the mercy of God, bound you to be his child. Your sin, therefore, is all the greater—heightedened by neglected privileges and disregarded obligations. Accepting the validity of the rite, you pronounce your own condemnation, and this condemnation, additional to that which belongs to you apart from baptism, will attend you from death to judgment, and from thence forward unto eternity. Let these considerations weigh with you, and weigh to your immediate repentance. Do not dismiss them lightly, or under the vain hope that time will bring a more convenient season for dwelling upon them. They concern much higher interests than those questions of social advancement or commercial prosperity which, were they to present themselves, would command and rivet your most devoted attention. Their importance merits the most serious reflection; their advantages to you will richly repay it. As nothing can rival them in value, let nothing precede them in thought. Give them the calm of your evening solitude, and the hours sacred to religious worship. Let them occupy your reflections alone, silently, intelligently, deeply; until meditation pass into penitence, and penitence into prayer, and prayer into holy resolution, and Heaven listens while you solemnly profess, “What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and

call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now in the presence of all his people."

Much of the irreligion of children is traceable to their parents. Ungodly themselves they have no concern for the piety of their offspring. They cannot teach what they do not understand, nor feel any deep anxiety to communicate what has no importance in their own esteem. To them, indeed, the things of the Spirit of God are not only unintelligible but foolishness: how then shall they make them known to others? Even many Christian parents are not wholly innocent of the sins of their children. Some from ignorance, more from indolence, most of all perhaps from negligence. Not a few are without a just conception of what they owe to their little ones. Nor do they seem ever to inquire. They spend their whole care in providing for their temporal necessities, almost without the suspicion that there are other wants, much more deep and abiding, for which they are equally bound to provide. Others are indisposed to the labour of religious training, disliking the self-preparation required for it, and then the skilful and patient application implied in it. It is amusing to watch the play of their children, but irksome to study their dispositions; interesting to observe their growing intelligence, but fatiguing to train their opening affections; beautiful to listen to their imitative lisping, but tedious to bring down to their capacities, in lessons of attractive simplicity, the words of eternal life. Tenderness of age supplies the first apology for this indifference; and then—when the cruel postponement has given to evil the start in the development of their nature—a multiplicity of domestic duties and cares.

Many, again, who would deny the charge of either ignorance or indolence, are nevertheless habitually and con-

pably negligent. They give their children to the Lord in baptism, but do not continue and make good the gift. To them the Sacrament brings no privilege, and conveys no obligation. Its whole interest is exhausted in the performance of the ceremony. They conceive no ideas of Christian nurture, and adopt no plan. They have no "church in the house," of which the father is at once the pastor and teacher. They are very devout in public worship, benevolent it may be in support of public objects, and zealous in certain departments of public labour; but their religious activities find no congenial and profitable sphere at home. They are willing to enter the field—the world—and to cultivate that, and some of them are amongst the most diligent of Christian labourers; but the particular enclosure intrusted to their exclusive husbandry, and which under skilful management would become as fragrant and lovely as the garden of the Lord, is allowed to lie neglected and waste, the plants which in their first shoots were tender and fresh, springing up sere and rank, choked and impoverished by poisonous weeds and unhealthy soils, until in the end, instead of growing into trees of righteousness, attaining a stately beauty, and yielding refreshing shade and fruit, they become mere cumberers of the ground, unsightly and noxious, nigh unto cursing, and ready to be burned. An example of this, instructive and melancholy, is given in the case of Eli and his sons.

It may be that some who read these pages are thus chargeable with the sins of their children. Others possibly may be in danger of incurring a similar condemnation. We beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation.

You are parents, and for this reason, if for no other, cannot stand alone. Other links besides those of citizenship and general humanity bind you to society and the world.

Between yourselves and your fellow-men comes your family. This connects you with the future as well as with the present, and may perpetuate you in a kind of representative existence throughout all time. The law of Christian benevolence is, that no man shall live to himself; but it also requires, that the benevolence shall for the most part operate first directly on those who are next to us, and then onward along the whole line of diminishing neighbourhood on those at a greater distance. The individual is the centre: our Lord also makes his love of self the type. Standing in the middle, his influence on society should radiate from himself all round, passing through those who are nearest to him; the circles gradually spreading outwards; each one pursuing the other as if to overtake it, and though becoming fainter the farther it goes, yet travelling onwards in visible ripple or gentle undulation, until it is lost to the eye or spent on the shore.

Your family, then, is your first concern; its interests have a paramount claim. In respect to temporal things no argument is needed to convince you of this. You readily acknowledge it, and with an instinct so powerful that you delight to provide for the well-being of your children, and would account it unnatural to be indifferent to their earthly wants. Is it less unnatural to overlook the wants of their immortal spirits, or to provide for them less amply and less continuously? Why would it be unnatural to leave them without daily bread and domestic comforts? Would it not be that the neglect would be a virtual denial of your love to them, your delight in them, your desire for their welfare; and, therefore, a practical renouncement of your parental relation? Is it not for the same reason equally unnatural to leave them without appropriate spiritual supplies—without provision adequate

to the growing necessities of their depraved but redeemed and deathless souls? Does not this, even more strongly than any other neglect, evince the absence of considerate affection, of intelligent concern for their happiness? Is it not the worst kind of orphanage to be deserted and left uncared for in that which is most essential to their well-being, whether for this world or the next? And is not this desertion, therefore, a proof of much greater cruelty than indifference to their physical wants would be—greater, indeed, by how much the soul is superior to the body, and eternity more important than time?

But unnatural in you, it is also unjust to your children. You have brought them into existence, and given them the nature they possess. Whatever wants they have they owe subordinately to you. For this reason you are responsible for their supply, and your responsibility is limited only by your power to meet them. To create necessities and not to provide for them is to act most unrighteously, particularly when the subject of them has no share in the act, and is for a considerable period, during which the necessities are ever increasing, impotent to help himself. This is the wrong you inflict upon your children, a wrong all the greater because the necessities are those of the immortal spirit, and greater still because privation becomes the parent of other and yet heavier calamities. In giving them life you have given them capacities for good and evil, with a natural tendency to the latter; powers and affections capable of indefinite expansion, and involving, as they are taught and trained, the certainty of eternal happiness or misery. You have thereby created wants in comparison with which those of the body are not worthy to be named. These wants are so many claims upon your care, skill, and utmost labour. The claims are all the stronger because the wants cannot at first

be known to your children. Their unconsciousness is only an additional element in your obligation. To meet them a well-adapted spiritual nurture is required. This must commence early, with the first quickening of infant intelligence, and be continued regularly, according to the capacity of the subject to receive it. Suitable instruction must be given, purifying example set, unceasing prayer offered. All the ministries of parental tenderness—in word, look, gesture, tones of voice, smiles, tears, reproof, encouragement—must, under the guidance of a heavenly wisdom, be continually employed. If not injustice is done to your offspring. Not only are wants created and left without supply, but disease is communicated, in the sinfulness of nature they inherit from you, and left without remedy. Very soon, indeed, do your children begin to ask for such a nurture; not directly at the first, but mutely and unconsciously; afterwards in broken accents and imperfect articulation, expressing indistinctly, because with little knowledge of their meaning, the spontaneous and involuntary pleadings of their own hearts: and to refuse them, or for any avoidable reason to pay no regard to their petition, is to act more unjustly than if they were to ask for bread, and you gave them a stone, or a fish, and you gave them a serpent.

But that which wrongs your children condemns also you. Neglect of them is so much sin against your own souls. And this for other reasons than the wrong itself. God has appointed you the guardians of their spiritual interests. The appointment is contained in the very relation you bear to them. He has made you parents that he might make you ministers, having a church in your own house, and taking the oversight of it, as good stewards of his manifold grace. He has intrusted immortal spirits to your care, to train them for his service, intending the parental instinct to ope-

rate as a special motive to the faithful discharge of the duty. But lest this through weakness or perversion should fail, he has prescribed the duty in formal language, and made it imperative by reiterated command. Not only has he announced as a general law that the after life takes its impression from the early education, but he has enjoined with most emphatic distinctness—"Ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath; *but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*" This is as much a Divine enactment as any one precept of the decalogue, and its violation by neglect involves you as certainly in condemnation and punishment;—with this peculiar aggravation, indeed, that the sin becomes fruitful of many other sins, extending its influences to your children, it may be unto the third and fourth generation.

Besides, for a long time your children cannot be considered apart from yourselves, and ever their well being must enter as a tributary element into your happiness. You have given them your life, the impress of your powers, your own distinctive nature. In them you have repeated and multiplied yourselves, and this so truly that the blessing or curse which falls upon them lights also upon you. In their joy you have greater joy, in their sorrow deeper sorrow; and their future blessedness or misery will either heighten or lessen your own. "I have no greater joy," says the Apostle John, speaking as a spiritual father, "than to hear that my children walk in the truth." With what additional intensity must this be the experience of those who are parents in a double sense, having given to their children the twofold life of nature and of grace!

Finally. You are under the solemn obligation of a pledge to bring up your children for God. The pledge was given when you presented them to him in baptism. It

was probably given publicly, in the sanctuary, in presence of the Church, and, certainly, with all the formality of a religious service. You may have thought little about the ceremony; but that was your error and your sin. However performed, the act was in itself of the nature of a promise: it bound you in a personal engagement to the duty of Christian nurture. The obligation still remains. You cannot escape it, and you cannot neglect it without adding to all your other guilt that of broken vows and a violated covenant.

Parents, and especially Christian parents, we ask you to ponder these considerations. The interests they involve are sufficiently weighty to engage your devourest study, and to deserve your deepest concern. Meditation is your first duty; resolution and action your next. Think of all that the parental relation implies, and of all that by the appointment of Heaven it demands. Form to yourselves a complete conception of what a Christian parent should be, and then, under the stimulus not of impulsive passion but of deep and holy love for your little ones, strive to realize and exemplify the whole idea. Learn to regulate your anxieties for their welfare by the essential value of their wants. Bring yourselves to that state of mind in which it will be as natural to you to think of their spiritual as it is to feel for their temporal necessities, and to provide for them with a care and skill and patient industry so much the greater as they are more important. Your labour shall not be in vain. The very effort will secure to you the blessing of God; for no work can be more acceptable and pleasing to him. His approval will be given in the secret communications of his grace to your own hearts, and to those of your children. Suggestion made by his Spirit will guide you to appropriate plans, and exertion put forth

at his command will issue in encouraging success. He will go before you and prepare the way, attend you and bless the deed. The light you kindle within he will feed and keep alive. The seed you sow he will moisten with dews and quicken with sunshine, making it bring forth and bud. No engagement of his covenant shall fail; no promise of his love shall be broken; but to you, as to Abraham his friend, will he verify to the utmost his words: **I WILL BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE.**

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